

Gameers' Republic

COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

GAMERS'
YEAR
2
REPUBLIC

BLUE STINGER

8 PAGES OF COVERAGE INCLUDING
AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH
CLIMAX GRAPHICS!

E3 PREVIEWS!

- DREAMCAST PREMIERES
CARRIER, HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2,
MARVEL VS. CAPCOM, COOLBOARDERS,
MDK 2 AND MORE!

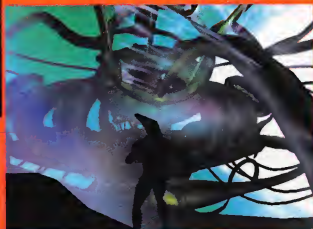
- TOKYO GAME SHOW
ALL THE ACTION FROM JAPAN
AS IT HAPPENED!

XENA, EWJ 3D, CRASH BANDICOOT RACING, THOUSAND
ARMS, COOLBOARDERS DC, BLOODY ROAR 2, EHRGEIZ

TOKYO GAME SHOW



MDK 2 DREAMCAST



HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2



FREE!
JADE
COCOON
POSTER
INSIDE!

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US \$5.99 CANADA \$7.99

- INTERVIEWS: SNK'S NORIMASA HIRANO, AND FEAR FACTORY!
- IMPORTS, ANIME, NEWS, MUSIC AND MOVIES!

GET READY TO COMMAND THE FUTURE



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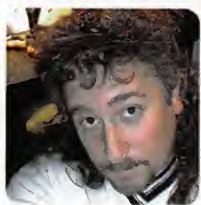
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Gamers' Republic MANIFESTO

For those of you who took the red pill, this is the Manifesto. As fate would have it, issue 13 (which I like to call Volume 2, Issue 1) marks our second year in publication and two important events: it's the pre-E3 issue, which will debut at the show (hello everyone, feet hurt?) where Sega will re-enter the console wars (nice to have you back, now where's my Phantasy Star V) and it's our first issue with our new distinguished distributor, Hearst Distribution Group, with whom we are honored to be associated. As we hurtle into the mainstream of magazine distribution and GAMERS' REPUBLIC grows in size, I can assure you that it will retain its edge as the foremost magazine for the world's truly fly gamers.

This month, besides our usual dose of Dreamcast, be sure to check out the insightful interview with SNK's Norimasa Hirano, and our second annual Tokyo Game Show report. We'll have the goods on E3 in the July issue. See you then!

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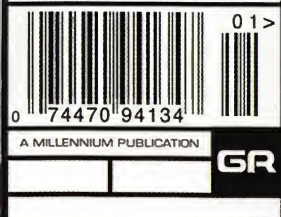
JUNE 1999

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GR VOL. 2, ISSUE *01 GAMERS' REPUBLIC

TRANSCONTINENTAL GAMING GUIDE ➔
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TOKYO GAME SHOW .32

Take a look at our second-annual Tokyo Game Show Report. Shen Mue stole the show as expected, but there were also dozens of sparkling fourth-generation PlayStation games on hand, as well as a major showing for graphics of the hand-drawn nature!



BLOODY ROAR 2 .68

Join us as we explore the mysterious world of human/beast hybrids in Hudson's sequel to one of the PlayStation's biggest fighters, *Bloody Roar 2*. This year's model features a rare breed of inspired character designs, flowing 60fps action, and one mean pussy. Cat.



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BLUE STINGER .22

Action and adventure graduates to yet another level: Climax Graphic's *Blue Stinger*, the first of its kind for the Dreamcast, is a visual feast that sets the tone for gaming's first 128-bit console.



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NEED A SAVE
TAKE A SAVE
GOT A SAVE
GIVE A SAVE



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"A must have for any serious gamer...the DexDrive's the coolest accessory to hit console gaming since analog and rumbling joysticks." Gamepro

"★★★★★...easily one of the coolest new ideas in PlayStation peripherals." PSM

"InterAct's DexDrive is by far the most incredible peripheral we have seen for the N64." IGN64

"The simple genius of the DexDrive never ceases to amaze me." Gamecenter

"This device is such a great idea, it's hard to believe no one has produced one before." Next Generation



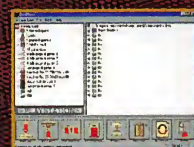
In a game, as in life,
what goes around, comes around.
Give an all-star roster,
take a level you didn't know existed.
Brag about a high score,
accept someone else's to challenge.
Whatever can be saved,
can be traded.
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Nintendo 64



PlayStation



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frontlines



THE TOKYO TOY FAIR HAS ARRIVED...



The Japan International Toy Fair Association once again held its annual Tokyo Toy Show where nearly 150 companies exhibited more than 30,000 new toys for the first time. Starting March 16, the four-day event saw over 100,000 people attend another great show, which more than ever was clearly being influenced by the computer game market.

Namco are set to release a brand new range of high-quality Tekken 3 action figures this May...

...but we're after the Tekken 3 Real Fighter, a portable Tekken fighting game mounted into a replica of Jin Kazama's glove. The damage you inflict in the game is proportional to the power of your actual punch!



Currently the hottest toys in Japan now are the Final Fantasy VIII figures, so it's not surprising that...

...wherever you go they are all sold out. Recent market research has actually shown that many casual users are first attracted by the goods and then buy the game afterwards, which would explain why many companies such as Square are so active in promoting these sales. Toys are the perfect marketing opportunity for many companies to cash in on strong character brands. Although the Tokyo Toy Show was mainly figure oriented, a growing number of FFVIII plush toys are also now available in limited supplies.



Even more realistic than the Resident Evil 2 figures from TOY BIZ...

...are these highly detailed creations that we found hidden away at the back of the Yamato booth. These horrors are just three of a great seven-set series, which are all equally impressive.



Ma-San and other characters from the game as well.

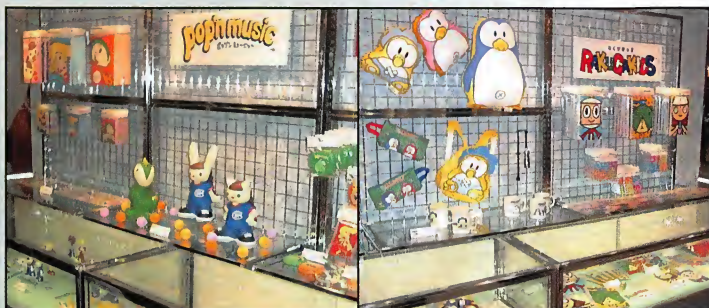
Talk about fast...

...these figures were on display even before the game was on release in Japan. Unfortunately only Lammy is currently scheduled for production, but if Um Jammer Lammy sells well when on the PlayStation, we may get to see Katy,



Chocobo goods have been on sale for quite awhile but this time...

...we have a whole collection of characters from Chocobo racing to get our hands on. They are really quite small and sold as free toys inside a box of sweets, so just about every supermarket should be stocking them.



The fact that Konami held a major booth at the Tokyo Toy Show shows that they are very serious about...

...developing a stronger retail division for game goods. While other companies such as Capcom and Namco appear happy only to sell through specialist stores, Konami are obviously looking to push into the general market as well.



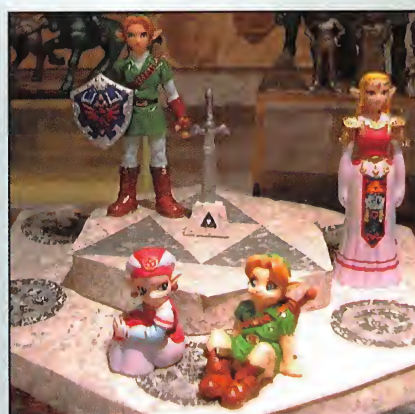
No SNK fan should be without...

...these cool new King of Fighters models that have just started going on sale at all good specialist shops across Japan.



The Liquid Borg is a...

...strange-looking bottle that transforms into a drink-analyzing robot. Put any kind of liquid into the bottle and it will tell you how much energy it provides. You can use any of your favorite drinks such as cola and lemonade, or you can mix drinks for even more powerful combinations. Results are displayed on the bottle's front-mounted LCD.

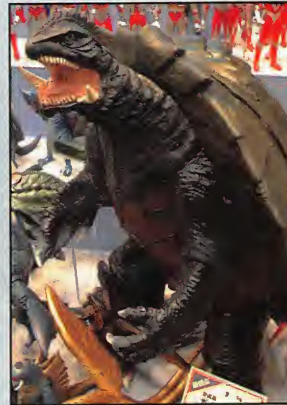
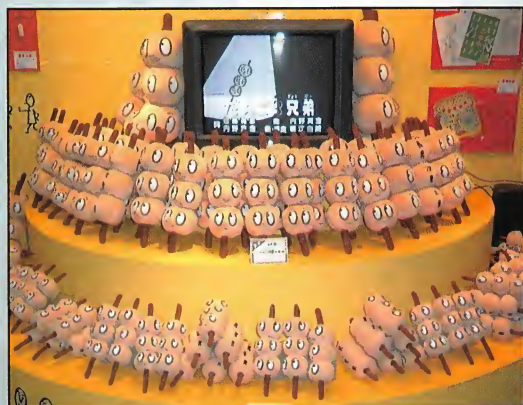


Similar to the Chocobo racing toys...

...this set of Zelda figures is just small models, but the attention to quality is very high. It's been a long time since we've had any decent toys based on Nintendo characters in Japan, so I guess they'll have to do.

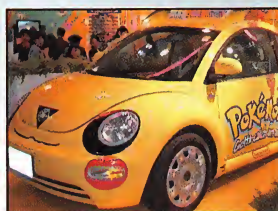
Dokitto's voice...

This small device scans the human voice and analyzes it to see if the person speaking is lying or not. Luckily, you can connect it to your mobile phone and check the honesty of what the other person is saying when you can't see them face to face. And this is a children's toy?



Two popular characters that will be very big this year in Japan...

...are the Three Dango Brothers (left, center), and Gamera (right). In particular, Dango (three dumplings on a stick covered in a sweet syrup) is likely to be massive this summer with Bandai planning a giant array of character goods to flood the shops with. Dango was originally a children's song on a TV program, but the CD single sold millions and now it's headed for major merchandising. Beware: a WonderSwan game spin-off is not impossible!



Sorry :(

No Pikachu news this month! We're keeping all the Pokemon news over to next issue for our special Pokemon feature!

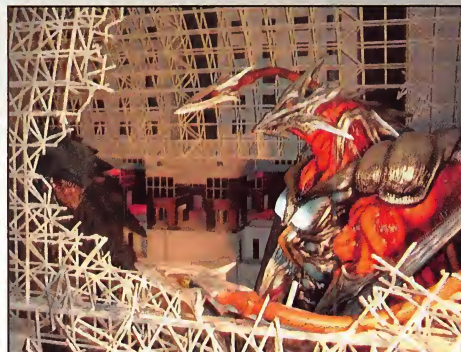


NEXT STOP, GAMERA...

Kyoto train station honored Gamera with its very own exhibition after it demolished the entire station in its latest movie...

...Gamera 3. In order to re-create this epic battle between Gamera and Irys, which destroys the entire train station terminal, SFX experts had to build a giant replica of the building, which was also put on display for all to see. As an additional tribute, Gamera's symbol was painted across the main flight of steps inside the terminal building.

In the movie, the heroine is aided by someone who uses the Dreamcast to create a program that helps her analyze Irys. At first she tries the GR-ROM in a Mac and it doesn't work, but eventually she learns that it'll only work inside a Dreamcast and finally gets to play it!



CRASH LANDING!

The newly built second air terminal at Japan's largest airport now houses...



...a special PlayStation game room featuring the one and only Crash Bandicoot. Away from the hustle and bustle of checking in and clearing immigration you

can now enjoy a quick game of Crash Bandicoot 3 before boarding your flight. In addition, a giant PlayStation controller built into the floor controls a huge mechanized Crash, which can be controlled by stepping on the buttons.

IT-SA ME! IT'S A BIRDIE?

At the recently held Pocket Monster Festival (full report next month) Nintendo took...



...the opportunity to show off a semi-complete version of Mario Golf 64. For those seeking a break from Pikachu and his pals, a spot of golf with Mario was just the thing, and large crowds gathered around the four N64 units running the game. Nintendo helpers

were thankfully on hand to explain the rules of golf to the many young children completely unfamiliar with the sport.

DANGEROUS CREATORS TALK BATTLE...

As always, the TGS hosted another round of developer chit-chat with Kan Naito (Climax), Katsuya Nakae (Konami), Yoshiaki Okamoto (Capcom) and Kouji Okada (Atlus) to talk about the following:

Playstation 2: The phrase 123 meaning either Dec. 3 or Jan. 23 for the release date is being rumored. Even though they don't believe it'll have the performance Sony are claiming, in order to create a game that will make full use of the PS2's full capability will still take around two years and so many small game companies will go under. **Biohazard:** In coded phrases, Biohazard will be heading towards Kyoto, Akasaka and Haneda (referring to the respective corporate HQ's for Nintendo, Sony and Sega) however they will all have different scenarios. BH CV will be ready for xmas this year but at the same time BH will also be on the PS2. **Dreamcast:** Because Powerstone only sold 100,000, Capcom apologized to Sega but promised full support from now on. Sega have asked Konami to do a DC soccer game and are currently discussing the contract. **FFVIII:** It had little presence because there was too much cinema and the scenario wasn't interesting. They thought that Mr. Sakuguchi's idea of an epic game was simply having extensive cinemas.



BLEEMING THE CUBE...

Sony's going to love this. First there was the Playstation emulator for Mac from Connectix...



...and now, after 300,000 downloads and a hoard of preorders, bleem!, the PlayStation emulator for PC, has been released with an appealing \$39.95 price tag. Here's the real kicker: If you have at least a Pentium 166 and 3D acceleration, games like Tekken 3 and Gran Turismo

3 – nearly the entire PS lineup is available – will look better than ever before. Sony lost a ruling blocking the sale of bleem!, so all bets are off. Hey, they're still making money on games, right?

PLAY TOO T FOR REAL!

Songbird Ocarinas, a company in Santa Barbara, CA, has released a replica of the ocarina used in the game *Zelda: the Ocarina of Time*!



These ocarinas are not just souvenirs from the game that look like an instrument, but are actual musical instruments that are capable of playing the entire chromatic scale with the holes placed in a similar position as on the game pad. If you can play *Zelda*, then you can play a Songbird ocarina! A song book and tutorial is included, as well as fingering charts for *Zelda* songs. You can hear an ocarina at the Songbird Ocarina website, and order one for yourself at: www.songbirdocarina.com. Or order one by phone at: (805) 899-1127 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. pacific time, mon-fri, or by fax: (805) 899-1127.

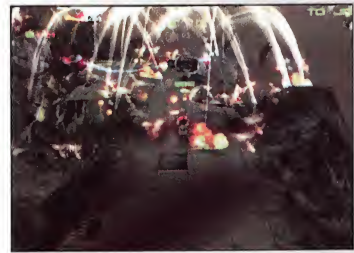
YOU NEED THIS GAME!

Rage's latest DC title is *Expendable*, so you'll have to get your hands on it ASAP...

Originally developed for PC (much like their first Dreamcast entry, *Incoming*), *Expendable* is expected to ship only a month after the PC version, currently due for release in June. Judging by this early screen, *Rage* seem to be using graphic effects similar to that in *Incoming*, though the gameplay is reportedly more akin to something like *ASC's One*.

Expendable is actually the name of an organic human weapon, a killing machine that you control from the safety of an airplane. If it is destroyed, another one will simply take its place, hence the name. Sixteen stages are planned, with locales ranging from snowy mountains to jungles, with dramatic camera angles designed to lend the game a cinematic feeling. Look for more on this potentially explosive title soon.

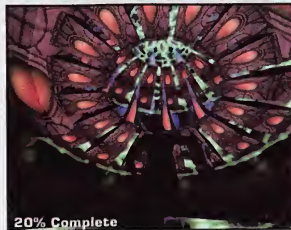
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NEW MDK2 DREAMCAST SHOTS!!!

The creators of Baldur's Gate are in control...

...so this potentially explosive sequel is in good hands. MDK2 is in full development at Bioware, as we can exclusively reveal with these new shots of a 20 percent complete game. MDK2 will offer huge, complex environments befitting the DC's impressive 3D capabilities, and Kurt's back with Cloaking and Chameleon powers, cool "Bouncing" sniper modes to catch enemies around corners and tons of new gadgets and bombs. We can't wait till E3 to play this one!



BLUE STARS, YELLOW MOONS, PURPLE DREAMCASTS?

Is it a new Dreamcast? No such luck, but this is still a supremely cool and rare piece of hardware. It's a limit-ed-production Dreamcast called the Madjora.

Designed by Tadahiko Taira, former GP motorcycle racer, only 500 Madjoras will be produced. Sega president Irimajiri, who has a close relationship with Mr. Taira, made this cross-pollination possible. The package will include an original carrying strap and a special sticker and will be priced at ¥39,800 (U.S. \$330). An initial reservation session for 300 units will be held at the Taira Racing booth during FIM '99 Road Race World Series at Motegi. The remaining 200 units can be reserved at a booth during the '99 Suzuka eight-hour endurance race. As to the limited production of 500 units, Taira Racing spokesman told us that this has no relation to GP500, the class that Mr. Taira raced in before. However, it is interesting to note that Honda owns both racetracks where reservations are being taken and that President Irimajiri once worked for Honda. Hmm. Only the hardest of the hard will be able to get their hands on one of these rare Dreamcasts.





WHAT'LL IT BE? WORM, PIG OR LIZARD...

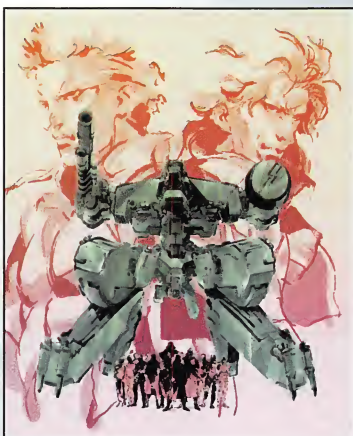
Crave Entertainment have just announced three new titles for the Game Boy Color...

...that, according to Jay Boor, Crave's PR director, promise to take full advantage of the GBC's new hardware, unlike Men in Black and Gex Enter the Gecko, the company's last two very forgettable GBC titles. In their defense, many companies simply added color to their latest batch of black and white releases when the GBC burst on the scene last November. Earthworm Jim, Godzilla the Series, and Babe, Pig in the Game Boy... I mean Babe and Friends, will all be playable at this year's E3. So hold on to your bacon bits, because Crave guarantee that all three will be worth their weight in pork bellies. Check in with us next month for the latest scoop on all three.



METAL GEAR AGAIN!

For the millions who couldn't get enough Metal Gear Solid (us included), Konami will be...



...releasing a tweaked version of their seminal game. Due to hit store shelves in Japan on July 1, Metal Gear Solid Integral will feature a smattering of changes and enhancements, including a first-person mode, all-English voice acting (Hideo Kojima was partial to the American dub), the choice of Japanese or English subtitles, and 300 missions in the VR training mode. There will be the

option to randomize item and enemy placement, as well as new costumes and events. In addition, the PocketStation will get some support, presumably with a mini-game of some sort. No word yet on a U.S. release of this reported three-disc package.

© KONAMI 1998

GAME.COM, ROUND TWO

Tiger Electronics are poised to release the second version of their...

...do-anything black and white portable. The newly christened game.com Pocket Pro features a smaller, more contoured casing in a bevy of iMac-like colors and a backlight for those romantic, candle-lit occasions. The internet functions of the older model remain, as you can purchase a 14.4 outboard modem for e-mail and text-based internet surfing. You can also connect the game.com to a PC and upload hi scores to Tiger's web site to compete against other players. The little unit again features a built-in calendar, calculator, phone-number organizer, and Solitaire game, all operable through the touch-sensitive screen and plastic pen.

Of course, it's the games that are all important, and Tiger continues to unleash their typical onslaught of big licenses. Metal Gear Solid, Resident Evil 2, Castlevania: SOTN, Fighters Megamix, Madden Football '99, Deer Hunter (!) and Command and Conquer are just some of the titles either available or coming in the future. We had a copy of Resident Evil 2 to check out, and it looked pretty good with big, easy-to-see graphics but slightly slow and stiff gameplay. We're very curious to see how Symphony of the Night and Metal Gear Solid turn out. Perhaps the stiffness will begin to dissipate, yeah?

The game.com Pocket Pro version is out now and costs a very reasonable \$29.99.



APOLOGIES!

Last month, we incorrectly identified the developer and publisher of 3 Xtreme as Electronic Arts. Oops. We obviously meant 989 Studios. Our sincere apologies to the respective companies.



WILL THE FANTASY EVER END?

It looks as if us lucky Americans will actually get a chance to play...

...Final Fantasy Collection after all, more or less. Square recently announced Final Fantasy Anthology for a U.S. release this November. Unlike the Japanese Collection, however, Anthology will feature only Final Fantasy V and VI and will exclude IV, which was never officially translated for the U.S. Let's hope the American packaging is half as cool as what was released in Japan earlier this year.

© Square 1999



YOUR ROOM IS WAITING

EVERY TOWN HAS ITS SECRETS...SOME ARE DARKER THAN OTHERS.
WELCOME TO SILENT HILL. PLEASE CHECK YOUR SANITY AT THE DOOR.
YOU'RE HARRY MASON. YOU'VE CRASHED YOUR CAR OUTSIDE OF TOWN.
YOUR DAUGHTER IS MISSING. AND SOON YOU DISCOVER SILENT HILL
IS NO ORDINARY QUIET TOWN. IN FACT, IT'S A LITTLE TOO QUIET.
PASS BETWEEN THE "REAL" WORLD AND A DEMONIC NIGHTMARISH
WORLD, RENDERED IN REAL-TIME 3D, WHERE YOU'LL BE
ON THE EDGE OF YOUR SEAT...AND THE EDGE OF MADNESS.



Don't be afraid of the dark.
Be afraid of what it's hiding.



Use your brain. Use your brawn. And
find your lost daughter, before you
also lose your mind.



Friend or Fiend? is anything
what it seems in this town?



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fashioned by the french.

*A supermodel that hits
the runways of Paris at
190 mph.*



05...04...03...02...01

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"R4 has to be the best-looking PlayStation racer ever (yes, edging out even Gran Turismo)."

- Official PlayStation Magazine, December 1998

"The first great racer of 1999 could be a *Gran Turismo Killer*."

- Official PlayStation Magazine, February 1999



It's how the French fry the competition. Its classic design and vacuum-like handling are legendary on the Grand Prix - not to mention its très nasty custom-designed aluminum engine. It is the Dirigeant - just one of the automotive marvels that tear up the streets in R4. With over 300 new cars, 45 fantastic models, 8 thrilling courses, a 2-player split-screen mode and only one way to drive. Fast. R4's asphalt gulping graphics and spectacular racing environments deliver racing speeds that were once deemed impossible. But not anymore. Now you've got R4. Au revoir, mon ami.

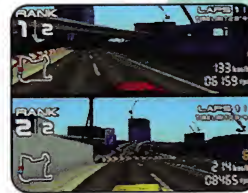
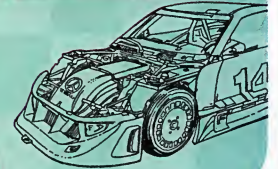
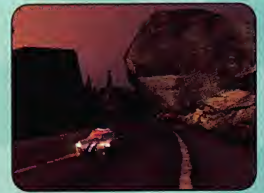


Think fast. Drive faster.

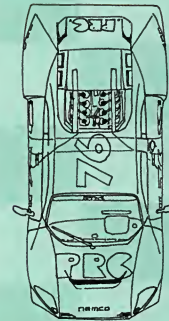
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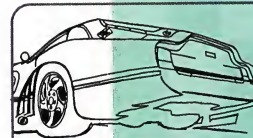
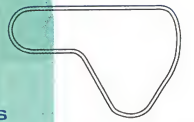
- Battle head-to-head in split-screen vs. mode



- Speed-tuned physics keep the arcade-style action fast-paced
- Championship performances unlock secret hidden supercars
- Don't be afraid to bump the other car, it's all part of a winning strategy
- Join one of four international race teams - each with individual strengths and weaknesses
- Design original logos to customize your car



- Race on gorgeous cityscape, countryside and race-track courses



- Money can't buy victory. You've got to earn new cars with your race performance
- Experience all the ups and downs of a full racing season in the Grand Prix mode
- Includes a Ridge Racer Turbo Mode bonus disc with 8 60 FPS tracks



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top ten selling playstation titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD MARCH 1999



- 1 **SYPHON FILTER** 989
- 2 **SILENT HILL** KONAMI
- 3 **FROGGER** HASBRO
- 4 **GRAN TURISMO** SONY
- 5 **METAL GEAR SOLID** KONAMI

- 6 **CRASH BANDICOOT 2** SONY
- 7 **RUGRATS** THQ
- 8 **WCW/NWO THUNDER** THQ
- 9 **NBA LIVE '99** EA
- 10 **SPYRO THE DRAGON** SONY

It may not boast the pinnacle of game design that marks Metal Gear, but Syphon Filter, a great game in its own right, is PS gamers' choice of espionage action titles for this month.

top ten selling nintendo64 titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD MARCH 1999

- 1 **MARIO PARTY** NINTENDO
- 2 **ZELDA: OCARINA OF TIME** NINTENDO
- 3 **GOLDENEYE 007** NINTENDO
- 4 **SW ROGUE SQUADRON** LUCASARTS
- 5 **MARIO KART 64** NINTENDO

- 6 **SUPER MARIO 64** NINTENDO
- 7 **WCW/NWO REVENGE** THQ
- 8 **SOUTHPARK** ACCLAIM
- 9 **NASCAR '99** EA
- 10 **CASTLEVANIA** KONAMI

Of course, leave it to Mario to dethrone Zelda from its lengthy reign at the top. And it looks like a lull in Goldeneye sales is about as likely as a Y2K armageddon.



top ten selling saturn titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD MARCH 1999



- 1 **NHL '97** EA
- 2 **CROC: LEGEND OF GOBBOS** FOX
- 3 **NBA LIVE '98** EA
- 4 **IRON MAN X-O MANOWAR** ACCLAIM
- 5 **MADDEN '97** EA

- 6 **MAGIC KNIGHT RAYEARTH** WD
- 7 **GRID RUNNER** VIRGIN
- 8 **SONIC 3D BLAST** SEGA
- 9 **NIGHTS W/CONTROL PAD** SEGA
- 10 **SPACE HULK: VENGEANCE** EA

It's the best game on this list, yet Magic Knight Rayearth can't seem to crack into the top five. At least our readership is smart enough to stay away from Iron Man X-O Manowar, right?

top ten selling pc titles

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD MARCH 1999

- 1 **BALDUR'S GATE** INTERPLAY
- 2 **DEER HUNTER 2** WIZARDWORKS
- 3 **CABELA'S B.G.H.** HEAD GAMES
- 4 **STARCRRAFT: BROODWARS** BLIZZARD
- 5 **HALF-LIFE** SIERRA

- 6 **FLIGHT SIM. '98** MICROSOFT
- 7 **COMBAT FLIGHT SIM.** MS
- 8 **MYTH 2** BUNGIE
- 9 **MONOPOLY** HASBRO
- 10 **SIMCITY 3000** MAXIS

Some of you might be offended by our incessant Deer Hunter bashing. We apologize in advance, because as long as it's on the list, we'll continue to sarcastically point it out.



top ten overall console

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD MARCH 1999

- 1 **SYPHON FILTER-PS** 989
- 2 **MARIO PARTY-N64** NINTENDO
- 3 **POKEMON BLUE-GBC** NINTENDO
- 4 **POKEMON RED-GBC** NINTENDO
- 5 **SILENT HILL-PS** KONAMI

- 6 **FROGGER-PSX** HASBRO
- 7 **ZELDA: OoT-N64** NINTENDO
- 8 **GOLDENEYE 007-N64** NINTENDO
- 9 **GRAN TURISMO-PS** SONY
- 10 **METAL GEAR SOLID-PS** KONAMI

world republic top ten games



japan

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 DENSHA-DE-GO! 2 PS | 6 FINAL FANTASY VIII PS |
| 2 UM JAMMER LAMMY PS | 7 SMASH BROTHERS N64 |
| 3 CHOCOBO RACING PS | 8 FINAL FANTASY COLLECTION PS |
| 4 GALLOP RACER 3 PS | 9 MONSTER FARM 2 PS |
| 5 POCKET MONSTER SNAP N64 | 10 MILLION CLASSIC PS |

*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD MARCH 1999

united kingdom

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3 PC | 6 A BUG'S LIFE PS/PC |
| 2 METAL GEAR SOLID PS | 7 X-WING ALLIANCE PS/PC |
| 3 FIFA '99 N64/PS | 8 GRAND THEFT AUTO PS/PC |
| 4 RUGRATS PS | 9 PREMIER MANAGER '99 PS/PC |
| 5 TOMB RAIDER 2 PS/PC | 10 SOUTH PARK N64 |

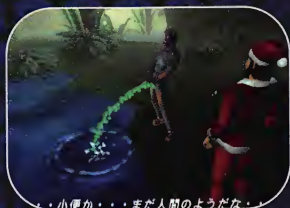
*RANKED ON UNITS SOLD THE MONTH OF MARCH 1999

gamers' republic top ten games

*BASED ON GAMES PLAYED THROUGH APRIL 8, 1999



d. halverson



- | | |
|----------------------|-----|
| 1 BLUE STINGER | DC |
| 2 METAL SLUG 2 | NG |
| 3 SONIC ADVENTURE | DC |
| 4 TONIC TROUBLE | N64 |
| 5 CHOCOBO RACING | PS |
| 6 MONACO GP 2 | DC |
| 7 THOUSAND ARMS | PS |
| 8 GOEMON'S ADVENTURE | N64 |
| 9 BEETLE ADV. RACING | N64 |
| 10 NEW WILD 9 | PS |



t. stratton



- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1 GRAN TURISMO | PS |
| 2 1080 SNOWBOARDING | N64 |
| 3 PANZER DRAGON SAGA | SS |
| 4 NHL '99 | PS |
| 5 EARTHWORM JIM | SG |
| 6 MADDEN '99 | N64 |
| 7 INT. SS SOCCER | N64 |
| 8 WIPEOUT | PS |
| 9 SILENT HILL | PS |
| 10 TREASURES O.T. DEEP | PS |



b. siechter



- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 1 BLUE STINGER | DC |
| 2 SMASH BROS. | N64 |
| 3 POWER STONE | DC |
| 4 GOEMON'S ADVENTURE | N64 |
| 5 PUYO PUYON 4 | DC |
| 6 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 | DC |
| 7 SUPER METROID | SNES |
| 8 EHRGEIZ | PS |
| 9 SUPER SPEED RACING | DC |
| 10 MARVEL vs. CAPCOM | DC |



e. sear



- | | |
|------------------------|-----|
| 1 SUPER MARIO BROS. DX | GBC |
| 2 NEED FOR SPEED 3 | PS |
| 3 EVERQUEST | PC |
| 4 MEDIEVIL | PS |
| 5 BLUE STINGER | DC |
| 6 KINGPIN | PC |
| 7 AVP | PC |
| 8 QUAKE 2 | PC |
| 9 GRAN TURISMO | PS |
| 10 RRT4 | PS |



m. hobbs



- | | |
|-----------------------|----|
| 1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 | DC |
| 2 POWER STONE | DC |
| 3 SILENT HILL | PS |
| 4 SAGA FRONTIER 2 | PS |
| 5 BLUE STINGER | DC |
| 6 MARVEL vs. CAPCOM | DC |
| 7 UM JAMMER LAMMY | PS |
| 8 SEGA RALLY 2 | DC |
| 9 GET BASS | DC |
| 10 EHRGEIZ | PS |



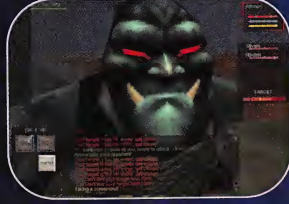
j. corby



- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 1 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 | DC |
| 2 CASTLEVANIA: SOTN | PS |
| 3 SILENT HILL | PS |
| 4 QUAKE 2 | PC |
| 5 KINGPIN | PC |
| 6 STARCRAFT | MAC |
| 7 ULTIMATE DOOM | PS |
| 8 C&C '95 | MAC |
| 9 METAL GEAR SOLID | PS |
| 10 SATAN'S HOLLOW | MAME |



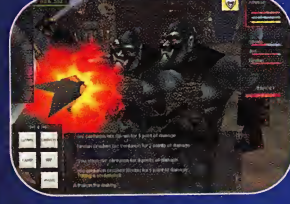
e. pratte



- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 1 EVERQUEST | PC |
| 2 REQUIEM | PC |
| 3 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 | DC |
| 4 QUAKE 2 | PC |
| 5 KINGPIN | PC |
| 6 DAIKATANA DEMO | PC |
| 7 BLACK TIGER | MAME |
| 8 VAMPIRE SAVIOR | SS |
| 9 BUST A MOVE | PS |
| 10 UNREAL | PC |



m. griffin



- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1 EVERQUEST | PC |
| 2 POWER STONE | DC |
| 3 THRILL KILL | EA |
| 4 HOUSE OF THE DEAD 2 | DC |
| 5 MEGAMAN & FORTE | SFC |
| 6 SONIC ADVENTURE | DC |
| 7 SUPER ADV. ISLAND | DC |
| 8 RADIANT SILVERGUN | SS |
| 9 BLUE STINGER | DC |
| 10 POCKET MuuMuu | PS |



As the U.S. Dreamcast launch is starting to take shape, and Sony has started revealing some information on its plans for Playstation 2, the familiar specter of nonsense tech phrases and ridiculous marketing lines has started to rear its ugly head.

The Playstation 2 announcement, coming as early as it did, was replete with this sort of nonsense, including outlandish claims from Sony like "the original Playstation radically changed the landscape for computer entertainment with the introduction of real-time 3D graphics" (guess all those PC flight sims I played, not to mention Jaguar and 3DO games, were just a figment of my imagination). Like Sega is with the Dreamcast, Sony is pushing the fact that the Playstation 2 will be 128-bit, continuing the trend of companies finding a way to up the bit count to cement the perception of their machine as being a full generation ahead of the previous ones. It is this focus on

"BITS: GIVING MEANING TO THE MEANINGLESS"

something of a surprise to anyone who tried NES development. While I can appreciate the difficulties of discussing factors like number of bits in an article intended for a general readership, it would have been a lot more accurate to say: "The best way to understand the significance of that 128 bits of processing power is that on its own, it has absolutely no significance whatsoever."

The reason for this is simple: there are a variety of components of a system that can use different numbers of bits, from the data bus to the memory addressing to the parts that do computations (these can be separate coprocessors or part of a larger chip). And this is for a single processor; most systems now have at least two main processors—the CPU and a separate graphics processor—and each part can use a different number of bits (witness the Jaguar, with components ranging from 16 to 64 bits). How many bits each component has can have significant effects on how the system performs, particularly when the number of bits of a particular part isn't enough to keep up with the rest of the system. The number of bits of the data bus plays a factor in how fast data can move between parts of the console. The number of bits for computations can affect accuracy: the reason the Playstation has seams between polygons is because it calculates geometry using only 12 bits of accuracy



entire additional system for PCs that had more RAM than that.

All of this means that even where number of bits does mean something, it never translates directly into how powerful a system is. It can certainly have some effect on computing power, but other factors like processor speeds and fill rates are more important, and it would take an engineer to figure out how all the different factors come together. When system power is concerned, what people are most interested in is how many polygons a system can render per second, the resolution it can do it at, and what sorts of special effects it can use. You still have to be careful about looking at these figures in any official specs though, since polygon per second figures are nearly always inflated, and the list of effects a system can handle is always severely padded with



TECHFRONT

BY BRIAN OSSERMAN

bit count that I find particularly bothersome, since it is a complicated issue that people tend to place far too much weight on. Recently, a colleague of mine wrote [Speaking of the Dreamcast] "The best way to understand the significance of that 128 bits of processing power is to consider this: The graphics engine in Sega's Dreamcast is 16 times more powerful than the processor in the original Nintendo Entertainment System, eight times more powerful than the processor in the Sega Genesis, four times more powerful than the processor in the Sony PlayStation, and twice as powerful as the processor in the Nintendo 64 (N64)." So assuming the Dreamcast can do three million polygons per second (its official spec), this would mean that the original NES was capable of 3D graphics with nearly 200,000 polygons per second, which would probably come as

cy (which works out to 5 digits of accuracy under the best conditions), so it rounds off where polygon edges are supposed to be, and they don't always end up right next to each other like they should. Lastly, the number of bits used for memory addressing determines how much memory a system can conveniently access. While not generally relevant in a console, it's amusing that the reason for DOS' backwards 640K main memory, and all the hassle involved in trying to use extra RAM, is that 640K is how much could be accessed using its bizarre 16-bit-based addressing system (memory addressing is simply how the system tells where to look for a piece of data), and they had to develop an

effects that you're simply not likely to ever see in a game. The bottom line, as always, is that you should look at the games in action and judge for yourself, since ultimately this will be the only way to judge the hardware accurately.





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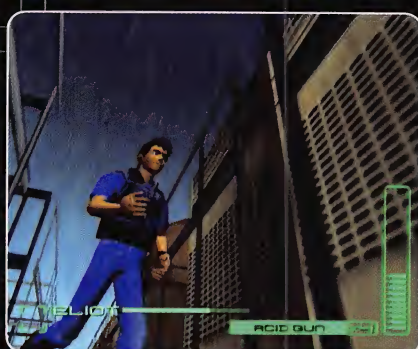
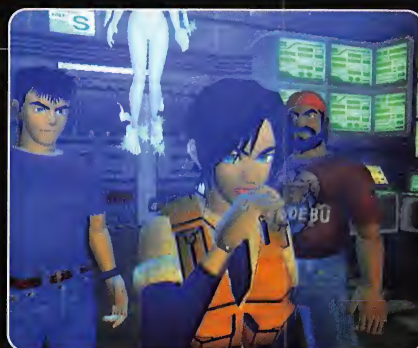


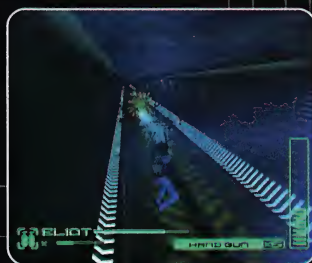
65 MILLION YEARS IN THE MAKING... BLUE STINGER IS READY FOR ACTION!

With the advent of any new system comes that feeling of heightened anticipation as each new game appears. It usually starts with a few screen shots in the Japanese magazines, next come the inevitable tiny Quicktime movies (or, if you're lucky, a promo video), and then finally that fateful day arrives... You uncharacteristically pop out of bed instantly, knowing (or hoping) that you're about to embark on a bold new gameplay experience. For a gamer, it's like gas in your tank. Next in line behind Sonic (I now hunger for the tweaked U.S. version) on my list of must-have Dreamcast launch games was Blue Stinger. The only action/adventure game in an initial line up that, for my taste, is a bit heavy on fighting and regurgitated arcade games and light on action and platforming, it was imperative that it lived up to the hype.

Like many, I'm sure, the first time I saw Blue Stinger shots I was amazed. With its huge realistic explosions, beautiful texture maps, massive creatures and realistic-looking characters, I couldn't imagine actually playing among visuals so stunning. Of course, by the time it rolled

around I had become somewhat accustomed to the Dreamcast's visual stimuli (although I'm still amazed by it), and so I'm happy to report to action and adventure fans everywhere that there's much more to Blue Stinger than just pretty graphics. There's a deep, immersive game here that will suck you in for 15-20 hours of mentally taxing and highly enjoyable gameplay, although, like Sonic, it could have been better with an extra month or so of programming. Treating Japanese releases as U.S. previews is becoming a peculiar trend. Like Sonic, Blue Stinger has obvious and easily repairable flaws that will likely be altered before the game comes to the U.S. For instance, in one scenario a nurse is standing atop a hospital bed to avoid being chomped by a herd of nasty little creatures on the floor. Besides her voice being way out of character, after you kill the little beasties she remains... standing on the bed. And should you return an hour later she'll still be standing on the bed; you can hit her with your bazooka and she'll just stand there. While this doesn't affect the game per se, it does diminish the sense of





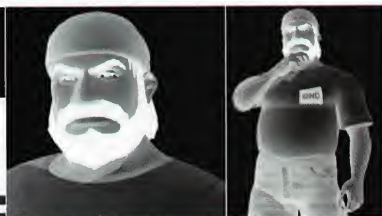
ASTOUNDING VISUALS WILL DRAW YOU IN... DEEP, IMMERSIVE GAMEPLAY WILL KEEP YOU ENTHRALLED!

realism and peril that the producers are obviously attempting to create. There are also some issues with the camera. Understandably, it is meant to provide a cinematic experience and is great most of the time, but there are those moments that, when running towards it, it becomes necessary to listen for the monsters, as there is no way to swing the camera around behind Eliot or Dogs to see what's in front of them. This is not a game breaker, but the game would have been more user friendly with an extra camera option or two. And, finally, ending my list of quibbles are the character models which, while smooth and nicely textured, are assembled rather simply. Eliot's neck resembles a cylinder between his shoulders and head, with visible seams on both connection points, and the character's arms and joints look plainly attached. (Climax address this issue and more in the interview following this article.) OK, enough with the negative; as you can imagine, there's a lot to celebrate about Blue Stinger – certainly enough to overshadow a few weak points.

The story unfolds in true cinematic style, like a cross between *Predator* and *Jurassic Park*, with a meteor rushing towards earth some 65 million years in the past, during the Cretaceous period. The meteor wipes out the dinosaurs, and is recorded in history as the "dinosaur killer." Jump to the year 2000 (OK Conan O' Brien fans, that's enough), and an earthquake has caused the submerged land directly where the meteor struck to rise to the surface, forming a tiny island, aptly named Dinosaur Island. Our story begins 18 years later. The KIMRA Corporation

has transformed the island in to a giant research center, complete with a residential district for the many people who work there (sort of like the colonists on LV426), and it seems to be meddling in some dangerous form of bio-engineering. It's Christmas Eve and our hero, Eliot Balade, an ESER officer (Especial Rescue Officer), has been suckered in by his friend Tim to help decorate a KIMRA yacht for a company Christmas party. So the stage is set. As Tim prepares the ship's good-luck charm, Nephilim (an angel of good luck from the bottled angel series), lightning strikes twice as another meteor (or is it the same one?) hurls from space, striking the Island in the exact same spot as it did 65 million years ago. The ensuing explosion forms a dome-shaped force field around the island and uncovers a huge metallic dish directly in its center. From that center, the tiny comet races towards the boat and playfully takes the shape of the ornamental angel, as Nephilim is born into the world as the comet's host. Soon after, the yacht is attacked by a vicious flying prehistoric menace, Tim is killed and Eliot dives to safety. As he washes up on a pier outside the vast island complex, Blue Stinger is ready to play.

After meeting up with Dogs, a surly sea captain who insists on helping Eliot out, and Janean, a sexy KISS Security Agent and sharp shooter, you're off on your first mission to the Hello Market district. A sea of neon lights and animated billboards, it's got all the charm of a futuristic disco inferno, but man, is it beautiful. It is here that Blue Stinger's excellent task-based gameplay begins to take shape. Complex scenarios



blue stinger



UNPARALLELED SPECIAL EFFECTS COMPLIMENT A BARBAROUS ARSENAL!

unfold in real time amongst environments you're used to seeing in CG movies, not running around in laying waste to meticulously detailed creatures. 'Stinger's MO is made up of several increasingly intense missions, each a complex trek riddled with mini-adventures, plot twists, and surprise encounters. Each objective plays host to an unending chain of events, finding ID cards, opening locked doors, buying and finding new weapons, making contacts, and even curing a disease. Unraveling the mystery behind the island and KIMRA's ultimate corporate goal is no small or easy task. The island's populous, a race of Dynocytes (human/dinosaur and somewhat insectoid hybrids) thirst for your blood, and killing them is as cinematic as it is perversely fulfilling. Stock up on Hassy Cola and hot dogs, because if these things get the jump on you, they can turn you into hamburger rather quickly.

The creature designs (by Robert Short of *Beetlejuice* fame) are truly inspired. Derived from human hosts (that thankfully carried a lot of loose change), killing them causes them to discharge shiny coins that Eliot and Dogs can use in the vending systems located throughout the island complex. Why they sell guns and ammo out of vending machines on Dinosaur Island I do not know, but regardless, the weaponry in *Blue Stinger* would make Charlton Heston drool like a new-born baby. Napalm Guns, Laser cannons, Gatling Guns (Jesse Ventura style – "I ain't got time to bleed") and even a *Star Wars*-like Light Saber can be used to splatter or fry the enemy. Once you acquire the Power Mixer though, it's really sauce time, as you mince and grind the enemy into a quivering pulp!

Musically, *Blue Stinger*'s soundtrack mixes well with the game's moody tempo, although when exploring the same sector for hours at a time, more variety would have been nice.



In one of Blue Stinger's many dramatic sequences, Eliot must first vent this massive tank and then outrun the ensuing trail of fire, only to be blasted across a deep chasm, should he succeed.





BLOOD-THIRSTY MUTANTS ROOM THE CORRIDORS. PAINT THE WALLS!



As I'm sure you've discerned by now, there is a lot to love about Blue Stinger, even though it may fall prey to many a critic's scalpel for its sparse array of miscues. With 128-bit technology, we're incited to demand perfection that much more, as superior technology leaves little room for excuses in terms of visible flaws, so I guess it's to be expected. Even though the bosses (except for the last one) were too easy, and the voiceover, with its off-beat connotation, was just, well, wrong, I reveled in Blue Stinger, because it's a gorgeous and well-produced Dreamcast adventure game that successfully sets the stage for those to come. I do believe that for Blue Stinger to realize its full potential in the U.S.

market, the voices, camera and certain situational miscues should be addressed, as this is a pivotal game for the young system. It will single-handedly have to carry the torch for the adventure breed until Code: Veronica rolls around, which judging by the version we saw at TGS has a ways to go. As it stands, Blue Stinger is a very good game that borders on great. I believe that SOA are serious about winning back the audience that made the Genesis number one, and therefore would be well served to implement some quick refinements while time still permits. We don't review import DC games headed for the U.S. specifically for this reason. It's common knowledge that Sonic Adventure will be vastly improved for the U.S. market. I hope that Blue Stinger will get at least equal treatment. Regardless, this is a game I highly recommend each and every Dreamcast owner experience for themselves. ⚡



Pictured above, an example of Blue Stinger's amazing detail and cinematic camera work, in a real-time environment. And pictured left, the island's vending system provides both nutrition and ammunition!



BLUE STINGER



THE DREAMCAST'S FIRST ORIGINAL ACTION ADVENTURE WAS BOUND TO RAISE MORE THAN A FEW QUESTIONS AS THE PREMIER 128-BIT CONSOLE GETS SET TO EMERGE ON THE U.S. GAMING SCENE. WE TOOK OUR QUESTIONS DIRECTLY TO THE SOURCE AT CLIMAX GRAPHICS FOR THIS INSIGHTFUL FIRST U.S. INTERVIEW WITH THE MINDS BEHIND BLUE STINGER...

an interview with shinya nishigaki

producer, climax graphics

GR: PLEASE TELL US ABOUT CLIMAX GRAPHICS.

SHINYA NISHIGAKI: As you know, Climax was established by Mr. Kan Naito in 1989 and made such titles as Land Stalker, Shining Force and Dark Savior. I was the scenario writer for Land Stalker and the producer of Dark Savior. Recently, the market for movie-like adventure games such as Biohazard and Enemy Zero has appeared. Since I like movies, when it was time for us to go our different ways I wanted to create these kinds of movie-like games, while Mr. Naito wanted to continue doing racing games and RPGs. In December of 1996 we created Climax Graphics, a kind of sister company. But at that time the only members were myself and Mr. Masaki Segawa, the executive CG designer. He used to be a designer at Sega and he worked on the Clockwork Night CG movie, however, he joined Climax to do the Dark Savior CG movie. Only the two of us came from Climax — everyone else is new. There are currently 18 people in total, and everyone here loves movies.

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH CLIMAX?

We set up Climax Graphics to specialize in graphics while Climax specializes in programming. Since they have a lot of programmers and we have a lot of excellent designers we help each other out by exchanging technical information, etc. Luckily, our offices are only 15 minutes apart.

WHEN DID DEVELOPMENT OF BLUE STINGER START?

Pre-production started in September 1996. This consisted of writing the scenario, the character design and also staffing the company. That took about six months. After that the design-work development began in earnest with real production starting in December 1997 and finishing in March 1999.

HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK WITH ROBERT SHORT?

In 1985, when I was still a university student, I was helping out at a mini-SFX convention, because I really liked SFX a lot. There were quite a few SFX artists there from America whom I was able to meet. Then 12 years later when I first decided to create a movie-like game with the Dreamcast, it was necessary to do some modeling; this is the realm of the SFX artist. Anyway, I called up some people who'd met before, and Mr. Short remembered me. After that I went to America to meet him and some other people, such as Pete Von Sholly, who helped with the camera work. In order to create a movie-like game, the camera editing is very important, so we had some professional Hollywood staff do the storyboard for us. I went to America about 10 times.

WHAT PROCESS DID YOU USE TO CREATE THE MODELS?

First of all the Japanese director made notes about each monster along with some rough sketches which we showed to Mr. Short. Next, we talked with him in detail about each of the monsters, such as their eye color, tail shape, claw size, etc. After that we created proper 2D illustrations that we further refined after discussing them with Mr. Short again. After we agreed on the final design, he created the 3D models. In total he created seven models, but we created rough designs for about 10 to 20 monsters. The models don't move, so afterwards the 3D motion designers decided on the limb joints by looking at the models. We had designed most the monsters' movements in advance, but we changed about half of it after looking at the models.

WHAT KIND OF PLAYER DID YOU CREATE BLUE STINGER FOR?

Our target players want some kind of entertainment on the weekend. Of course, they rent videos, but they also have a big interest in games as well. In Japan, Hollywood movies are very popular, so I wanted to create an interactive movie-like game where they could appreciate how great the Dreamcast CG really is. Final Fantasy is really too long, so for Japanese people who don't have much time, when they play it the next time they can't remember the story. A movie is only two to three hours, so its impression on you remains intense. I wanted to create a non-stop action game that they could play and complete over just one weekend.

DID YOU USE ANY REFERENCE MATERIALS FOR THE DESIGN IN YOUR STAGES?

Shenmue is set in China, Tomb Raider is set amongst ancient ruins and Biohazard is set in an old European-style mansion. We wanted to create an original world stylized like an American movie with over-the-top neon signs, gaudy color schemes, and so on — a little like Las Vegas but nothing that actually exists. Amongst these images we have the Kimra Corporation, whose name appears throughout the game, similar to *Blade Runner*, and there are also plenty of Japanese stereotypes in the game, like those images found in *Black Rain*. The designers watched many videos to get various ideas for the game.





HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT DESIGNING ALL THE IMAGES IN THE GAME?

We put together a specialist texture team who created all the pictures on a Macintosh. All the posters and billboards are original. Everyone enjoyed creating them; just these alone number over 200. The Dreamcast's screen resolution of 640 X 480 is very high, so we were able to represent things in great detail. For example, in the cinema all the movie posters include information on what movie it is, which star appears in it and the outline of the movie's plot as well!

ONE OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE SCENES IN THE GAME IS THE EXPLODING FUEL TANK SCENE. HOW DID YOU DO IT?

This is all down to the Dreamcast's great spec, as no matter how far you pan the camera out you can still show everything in detail. Right from the beginning we deliberately created a background that would go well with the long camera shot – which we call a helicopter shot – so that it would look impressive. In other games, up to now you could only watch the explosion scenes as a movie, but in Blue Stinger you can actually run away from it. I really wanted to put this feature into the game. This scene is only about two minutes long, but it took us six months to do. In the release version most people can escape the explosion on their second try, but at test time the Sega debug team said it was too difficult because it took about seven times to complete, so we changed it.

THERE ARE PLENTY OF DIFFERENT ELEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE GAME, BUT HOW DID YOU GO ABOUT DECIDING HOW TO PUT THEM TOGETHER?

When the player is playing non-stop for 10 to 15 hours, it's very important to consider the player's psychology by balancing the story,

puzzle, action and battle segments of the game. Just like a weekly TV drama series which ends at a dramatic moment to make you want to see the next episode, we have to keep pulling the player along to make him want to continue playing. However, you can't have action all the time, or the player will become exhausted. The puzzles are there to make you stop and think, which prevents the game from just being on rails. In addition, there is plenty of humor in the game as well. You can't keep the tension high throughout the game without having a little humor as well for contrast. This is just like *Die Hard*. We paid a lot of attention to this as well. Personally, I like Neil Simon, so I deliberately chose that American style of conversational wit. I don't think there's any other game that has as much of this kind of humor as Blue Stinger. However, the humor isn't just a simple joke; there's often an important hint or something behind it. Although it took a long time to fine tune the rhythm of the game, I'm really happy with the final result.

WHAT DID YOU CONSIDER MOST WHEN DECIDING WHICH PUZZLES TO PUT IN WHICH ROOMS?

I wanted the riddles and puzzles to be related to the actual locations. In some other games the riddle is completely out of place to its setting and is strange because it doesn't make any sense. However, I wanted them to have realism. For example, in the supermarket there was a stamp rally and in the freezer room you can adjust the temperature. On top of this I added a funny element as well. In *Die Hard*, it's Christmas but no one is there. That's ironic; I used this kind of irony on some of the stages as well.

WAS THERE ANYTHING YOU WANTED TO PUT IN THE GAME WHICH YOU ENDED UP HAVING TO LEAVE OUT?

There are plenty of things we had planned on doing but we weren't able to do because we didn't have enough time. For example, right from the very beginning I had wanted the players to be able to drive the jeep, but now it's just a CG scene! Another is that first of all, Blue Stinger was to be a two-player game with both characters onscreen at the same time where Dogs would have been a computer-controlled character with AI, but we ran out of time, so we cut that. One more is that there was one monster we didn't get to put in. It was a dolphin monster with long necks which Mr. Short even created a model for. However, it might appear in our next game.

WHERE DID YOU GET YOUR IDEAS FOR THE MONSTERS?

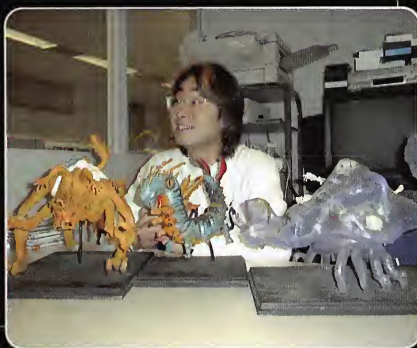
First of all, we didn't want any kind of zombies like in Biohazard. We considered various types but we needed at least one creature carrying money, so we had to have a monster mutated from a human – almost like a monster with a human attached. After talking to Mr. Short, we wanted to have American-style monsters.

DID YOU HAVE PROBLEMS WITH ALL THE RED BLOOD?

It's strange, isn't it? In *The House of the Dead* and *D2* the blood is all green, but in Blue Stinger it's red, and when you kill the monsters, they spurt it all over the place. However, our producer at Sega, Mr. Ogawa, did a great job in getting it approved. We kept telling people that the creatures were monsters, not zombies, because even creatures that used to be human – that includes zombies – can't have red blood.

WHAT ABOUT THE MONSTERS' MOVEMENTS?

I wanted vigorous action, so I had the monsters jump forward, but at different levels of speed and intelligence. All the monsters possess IQ algorithms. The first ones you meet aren't too bright, but as you progress they get smarter, and if you get close to them, they leap at you. Their speed increases as well. If you blow their head off, then they stumble around, because they can't see.



OK my friend, how much for the models?
Go on, name your price... You have to respect this level of dedication...
So, how much?!

CLIMAX GRAPHICS 1999
SHINYA NISHIGAKI, PRODUCER

**WHICH CHARACTER WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT TO CREATE?**

Other than the mega-boss, the most difficult was the ice dragon. Because it's large and bulky, its movement tended to be slow and clumsy, so it was easy to defeat by just getting around behind it. We had to work hard programming it to be able to swing around quickly to face you. In addition, since it was big there were a lot of collision-detection problems with the walls, etc.

WHY DID YOU END UP PUTTING CHARACTERS FROM PEN PEN IN THE GAME?

Originally, we were just going to have four normal animals – a rabbit, a bear, an elephant and a bird. However, Mr. Daisaku Ikejiri, who was the producer of Blue Stinger in the beginning, moved to General Entertainment and became the producer of Pen Pen. Since we were still good friends we agreed to use some Pen Pen characters instead of the animals.

PLEASE TELL US ABOUT THE ATMOSPHERIC SOUNDTRACK?

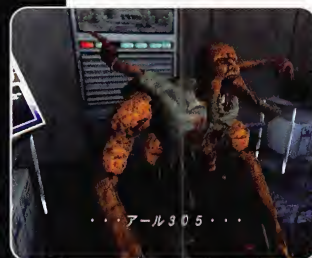
This time I wanted a Hollywood-style soundtrack a little like something you would expect from John Williams. The composer was Mr. Toshihiko Sahashi, who was one of the top graduates from Tokyo Music University; he composes music for movies and TV dramas. I gave him the opening and ending CG movies and let him create the music himself, using a 50 piece orchestra. For the other tracks in the game I wrote about 20 lines of explanation and sketched some images. It was his first time to compose game music, but he created it as if it were for a real movie.

ONE OF THE MAIN LIMITATIONS OF BLUE STINGER IS THAT YOU ARE UNABLE TO CHANGE THE CAMERA VIEW YOURSELF. WHY DIDN'T YOU INCLUDE THIS FEATURE?

The reason we didn't want the players to be able to alter the camera view themselves is because the tempo of the game would be affected as players would spend too much time moving the camera around trying to look for places they couldn't see. This is the first time we've tried this system, so depending on the response we get from the players, maybe this will be an issue that we'll have to solve for our next title. Perhaps next time we'll let people change the camera angle themselves.

WE'VE NOTICED VISIBLE SEAMS BETWEEN THE NECK AND TORSO, ARMS AND TORSO, ETC. IS THERE ANY WAY TO SMOOTH OUT THE TRANSITION BETWEEN BODY PARTS?

When we first started working on the Dreamcast, the first hardware didn't have global enveloping capabilities, that's all. With the characters in Pen Pen, which don't use so many polygons, it's not a problem. But for our characters, which are very realistic, there are a lot of polygons, and that causes difficulty. We are only using about 30 to 50 percent of Dreamcast's spec, so for our next project we'll use all 100 percent and be able to calculate all the body joints completely, which will prevent this situation from occurring again.

**DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR THE PLAYERS?**

When you're stuck on a puzzle, I suggest you make good use of the maps and read the explanations of the items. If you do these two things, you'll be able to progress much more smoothly through the game. In addition, Dogs may be slower than Elliot, but he's got a stronger defensive capability, more hit points, he's more resistant to damage, he doesn't fall over the edge so easily, and he can push things faster. If you use him effectively, then he's really useful.

NOW THAT YOU'VE FINISHED BLUE STINGER, WHAT IS YOUR FINAL IMPRESSION OF THE GAME?

Considering the fact that there were a lot of handicaps with working on the early versions of Dreamcast, I'm really satisfied with the final result. Most players don't really appreciate that it was really important for Sega to get a full 3D polygon game out on the Dreamcast. We are a new company with only 18 staff members. When we worked on our first game, not only were we this small company, we were working on a brand-new hardware platform that wasn't even fully ready. Coming for the Dreamcast later this year, there's Biohazard Code: Veronica, D2 and Under Cover, but we were the first to create a full 3D polygon adventure/action game – and I'm really proud of this achievement. The fact that only 18 people could create this game really shows the power of the Dreamcast, but we had to work very hard to achieve this. Everyone did the work of three people, as you'd normally have about 50 people to create this type of game. We were working 24 hours a day for two years, and during that time we only rested for about five or six days.

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COMING JULY 14, 1999

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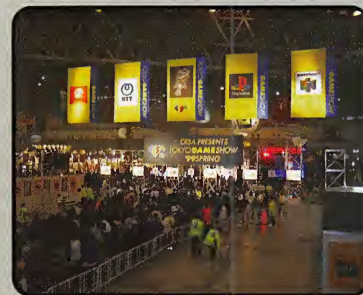
STORY OF THE TAMAMAYU



TGS '99

TOKYO GAME SHOW

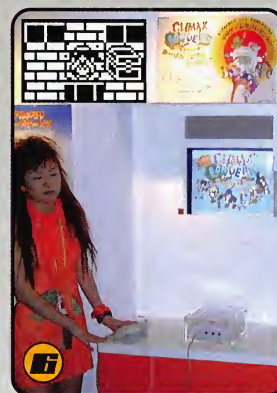
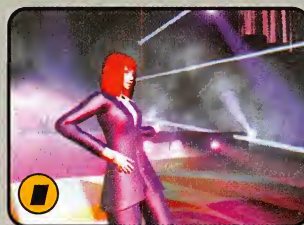
Despite the heavy rain and bitter wind, Japanese gamers were out in force at the Tokyo Game Show Spring '99 to make it the busiest show ever, with over 163,000 people attending. With Nintendo absent as always, it was a straight battle between Sony and Sega as the Dreamcast's quality strove to overcome the Playstation's quantity. Eighty-two companies exhibited 500 titles (PS: 43%, DC: 11%, N64: 3%) with the emphasis on simulation games (23%), RPGs (13%) and action (12%). There were no really big surprises (except for the SNK vs. Capcom announcement), but plenty of great games on show with something for everyone.



★ SEGA ONLINE GAMING TAKES CENTER STAGE FOR DREAMCAST

Most of the games on Sega's booth, such as HOTD 2, Get Bass and Blue Stinger, are already on sale, so instead we'll look at Sega's other efforts to attract new Dreamcast users by pushing the internet services available. A large number of Dreamcasts were linked up so that they could play online with some Dreamcasts set up in Sega's theme park, Joyopolis. Three network games were playable: Sega Rally 2 (PIC 2), Frame Grider and Around the Hot Springs (PIC 4), a mixture of card and board games. Monitors on the wall broadcast live images from Joyopolis to prove it was really happening, and none of the games suffered any slowdown or net problems whatsoever. In addition, a very large section was devoted to explaining to many interested gamers the benefits of the soon-to-start webTV (PIC 3). Another new internet game shown was Super Producers (PIC 1) from Hudson, in which you must become a producer and create your own artist. You can dress them up in your favorite style and manage their publicity. Once you're happy with them you can then debut them on the internet and see how they do.

Also on the Sega booth was a VMS mini-game for Climax Landers (PIC 6). This was almost as popular as Collect Shenmue, and thousands queued to download it; unfortunately the Dreamcast version itself wasn't on show. On the up side, Giant Gram All Japan Pro Wrestling 2 (PIC 5) was at least playable.



EIGHT THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE TGS! You couldn't go? Never mind! With our *Eight things you ought to know about the TGS* guide you'll be able to fool anyone into thinking that you were really there! - **No.1: GAME MANIACS.** The typical gamer is a 17-year-old male senior High School student who likes to play simulation games on his PlayStation everyday. (A) Warp fans and scarier than D2! (B) Hours before the show starts 30,000 gamers are already waiting.



(C) 1998 1999 SEGA, (C) 1999 HUDSON, (C) CLIMAX

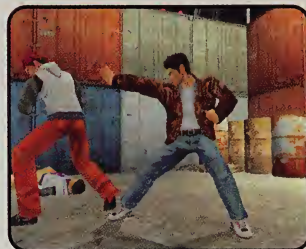
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★ SEGA SHENMUE CONQUERS



Shenmue was the biggest game at the TGS and Sega made sure that everyone knew it. There were five different areas where you could try out different Shenmue mini-games, each utilizing a special feature of the game. Each one used Magic Weather and Time Control as well. The most popular was a VMS game called Collect Shenmue, where thousands of gamers clamored for hours to download up to 16 Shenmue characters, each with their own unique animation sequence.

In a Yokosuka warehouse Ryo must fight and defeat 50 enemies within two-and-a-half minutes. This was the setting for the FREE BATTLE mini-game, in which you have complete 360° control over Ryo's movement and can choose your own fighting actions: A button - Kick; X button - Punch; Y button - Throw; and B button - Dodge. Although in development (it's 50% complete), it still shows a lot of promise and considering that the fight scenes are only about 5% of the game, this feature still plays better than most other dedicated fighting games.



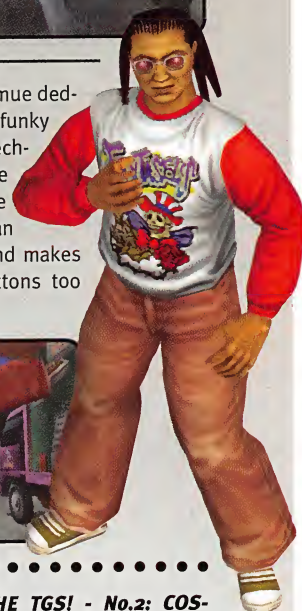
Just like the Free Battle mode, the QTE BATTLE mini-game was simple but still a good demo for the users to try out. Using just the A and B buttons and the direction pad, you once again fought some bad guys in the warehouse. Due to the fixed nature of all the QTEs, this feature is now 80% complete, meaning that only minor fine tuning probably remains to be done.



The most interesting mini-game was the QUEST and QTE mini-game, in which you had five minutes to find a guy called Terry by walking around the town asking people if they had seen him. After you found him he then tried to run away, leading you into a QTE chase sequence.



The final mini-game is a new feature of Shenmue dedicated to players not used to fighting games. A funky character called Tom teaches you a fighting technique through rhythm and dance. Once you have mastered it you can then use it in any of the Free Battle scenes. Because it's in real time, he can give you advice by watching your mistakes and makes comments such as "you're pressing the buttons too slow," among many others.



EIGHT THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE TGS! - No.2: COS-TUME PLAY: Japan is now famous for its legions of gaming fans who love to dress up as their favorite game characters. However, it's not just for amateurs anymore, as most booths now employ their own costumed actors who



are willing to stop and pose for anyone with a camera. On our travels around the TGS hall we found two characters from Power Stone, Sony's Um Jammer Lammy playing guitar live on stage, and a class full of High School girls singing on the Banpresto stage.

★ NAMCO THE NEW FACE OF SOUL CALIBUR

Even for those people impressed by the sheer scale of Shenmue, the best Dreamcast game of the show for many had to be Soul Calibur. Nothing else seemed to capture the pure beauty of the DC's incredible CG power or match the instantly playable Soul Calibur combat system. Compared to many other DC titles at the TGS that failed to impress, Soul Calibur already has that polished feel to it that was impossible to ignore. In addition, Namco have gone far beyond just a standard port by visually enhancing the characters and stage scenery significantly. While other games were left untouched, there was always a long line to play this game. Undoubtedly, Namco's first Dreamcast title will be a triple-A product that will set the standard for other game makers to follow.



When you see this game in action, you will be witness to the future of fighting games.

★ UEP



Cool Boarders DC is looking very impressive, with beautiful background scenery and realistic lighting. At 60 fps all the action is very smooth, and the courses are much more complex than before, with various obstacles adding much needed gameplay variation.

★ BANDAI

Although previous Gundam games have left us saying, "Why bother with yet another?" in Japan Gundam is almost a religion in itself and no new hardware would succeed without at least one installment of it to keep the fanatical happy. At least Gundam Side Story 0079 takes a break from the traditional anime-based Gundam games of the past, and instead gives us a slightly more interesting military image instead.



★ GENKI

Genki pulled out all the stops to recreate that real driving feeling by giving players a true driving chair, DC steering wheel and wide-screen TV to fully appreciate their debut DC title, City Highway Battle.



★ TOMY

Yuke's, famous for their wrestling games, bring us their greatest title yet, courtesy of Tomy, for the Dreamcast. Making use of a special 3D scanner to bring the famous wrestlers to life, Tohkonretsuden 4 is very likely to give Sega's Giant Gram a run for its money.



EIGHT THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE TGS!

No.3: COMPANION GIRLS: No TGS would be complete without its lovely ladies handing out flyers or telling us what buttons to press on the controller. This year's prize for Best Companion Costume went to the Data East team (A), and Mika Noyama 87-60-88 (B) and the others are now featured in limited edition Companion Girl Trading cards (C). What next?



CAPCOM



For those wishing to see the latest Biohazard Code: Veronica video, one first had to brave the terrifying Capcom theater, where those with weak hearts or poor constitutions were warned not to enter! However, the lackluster scenes of familiar groaning zombies and Claire's puppet-like motion was no better than the PS version. In fact, it looked even worse. Certainly, the high-res screen shots look great, but there was no atmosphere at all and at times it was just plain boring. CV seriously failed to live up to expectations and one is left wondering what Capcom were thinking about when they produced this promotion video. Although it easily beats Carrier or Seven Secret Mansions, I'm sure most people have higher standards for Capcom's premier Dreamcast title. There's still plenty of time left, so let's hope they set things right.



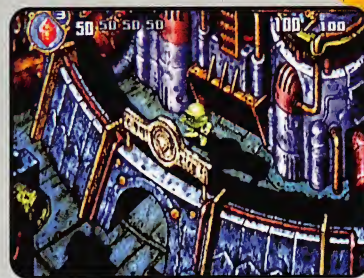
KOEI



Seven Secret Mansion's unique concept is that, when playing in 2-player mode, the screen splits whenever the characters are separated. I can imagine how the designers thought this would be cool when then started planning the game, but in reality it just doesn't work. As the camera angle and control system changes back and forth between the two screen modes, it just becomes an annoying nuisance and distracts from the gameplay. One-player game recommended.

HUDSON ..

Since we last covered Elemental Gimmick Gear, the game has been completed and is now due for a May release. Although the 3D engine is OK, it is the beautifully hand drawn maps that look the most impressive, and while some will compare them unfavorably to the quality we've come to expect from Square, at least DC owners will finally have an opportunity to enjoy their own unique 2D action/RPG.



KONAMI

Konami's first DC title, Pop 'n' Music, didn't do very well – which is not not surprising, as I'm sure that most people didn't buy a DC to play a game that was also coming to PS and looked visually the same. So it's at long last that Konami have given us a real DC game. Graphically, Air Force Delta looks



great, although the stages look a little empty. It'll be interesting to see how it compares to Namco's Ace Combat 3, which, even on the technically inferior PlayStation, still looks awesome.

FROM SOFTWARE

Members of Sega's "Dreamcast Partners" could pick up a free demo copy of Frame Gride, while the rest of the public had to endure some fairly long lines at the From Software booth instead. At the Sega booth they also had a fully networked version up and running as well. Quality stuff.



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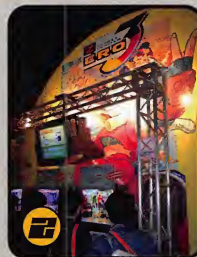
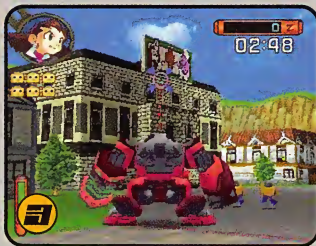
EIGHT THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE TGS! - No.4: GAME GOODS: For the game maniac, buying goods is more important than playing games at the TGS, and the first port of call is almost always the Square stall (B). A massive array of FFVIII, Saga Frontier 2 and Legend of Mana goods were soon gobbled up, leaving only the scraps behind (A). Of course, all your favorite characters were available for purchase, including a traditional Japanese fan with Capcom's Kobun character all over it (C).



★ CAPCOM THE CLASSICS... LIVE ON

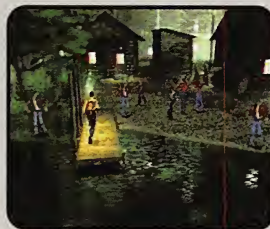
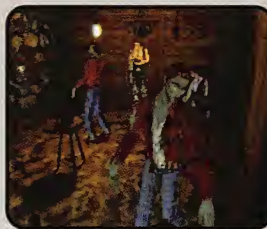
Dino Crisis (PIC 5) was looking really good and just goes to show that you don't need zombies or next-generation hardware to make a great game. Unfortunately, it still wasn't playable, but the video they were running at their Capcom Theater was a good indication of what we can expect. All the dinosaurs were beautifully animated and all the scenes we saw were full of tension and excitement as they came at you from all directions.

Capcom were showing off two new games at their booth. Tron and Kobun (PIC 3) is a kind of side story to Rockman Dash and uses a considerably enhanced Rockman Dash 3D engine. It was playable and looks like it could be a lot of fun. Gaia Master (PIC 4) was only on video but appears to be another card-based fantasy-battle board game, which is currently all the rage in Japan. SFZ3 (PIC 2) for the DC was also popular, and there were several special SFZ3 stage events (PIC 1) throughout the weekend.



★ BANDAI A NEW INTERPRETATION OF SURVIVAL HORROR

Although Bandai were obviously concentrating on the Wonder Swan, it was good to see that they weren't neglecting their console lineup, as they had two new interesting games, coming this fall. Silent Bomber was playable (we'll have a full review next month), but it's basically a 3D action game where you must strategically place bombs to destroy your enemy. Countdown Vampires (shown opposite) is an action/horror game where the main plot has you fighting vampires against a time limit. It was only shown on video, but it has some awesome CG movies!



★ FROM SOFTWARE.....

It was the first time for From Software to have a booth at the TGS, but they were there in full force with two new games for the PlayStation. Echo Night 2 (shown opposite) is now set in a large gothic manor house and, although not playable, looked great on video. Spriggan is a 3D action/adventure game based on a famous manga series that was made into a movie last year.



EIGHT THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE TGS! - No.5: FAMOUS PEOPLE: You can meet a lot of big names at the TGS. Just a few people we met were: (A) Kaneko and Okada chatting on the Atlus booth about Maken X and Persona 2; (B) three of the Shemue voice actors handing out gifts; (C) Yoshiki Okamoto, the friendliest director at Capcom who'll always give you a smile and a wave, and (D) Kenji Eno, talking about D2.



3.19.99-
3.21.99

NAMCO

Ace Combat 3 Electrosphere was impressive, easily rivaling Konami's Air Force Delta for the Dreamcast. Graphically, Namco are pushing the Playstation to the limit. The futuristic design keeps up the trend Namco started with R4 to give the game a stylish feel, but behind all the impressive visuals is a comprehensive game system, which appears to have more depth than AC2.

Dragon Valor was mainly a long CG movie on video, but odd clips of game footage showed that it certainly has potential to be a big hit. Fighting the massive dragons on screen looks like

it's going to be a pretty awesome experience. Exactly why Dragon Valor or Star Ixiom still weren't playable at the TGS isn't known, but with these two and Ace Combat 3's release date still unscheduled, it appears that Namco still seem to be deciding how to handle their 1999 lineup before switching development over to the Playstation 2.

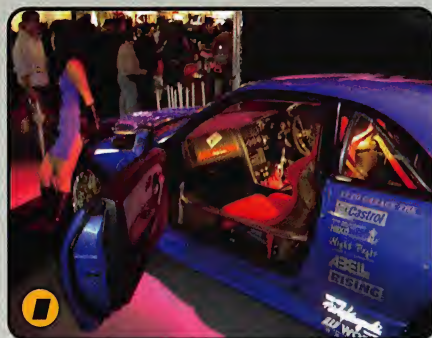


SQUARE 2D AND 3D ON DISPLAY FROM THE MASTERS

Square just keep giving us more reasons to hang on to our PlayStations for as long as possible. With an incredible lineup of games, the Square booth (PIC 4), with a replica car from Racing Lagoon (PIC 1), pretty much dominated the TGS as the place to be for all things PlayStation.

Most of the booth was dedicated to Saga Frontier 2, which was released on April 1. In that package you get a demo disk with playable versions of Racing Lagoon (PIC 7) and Legend of Mana (PICS 5 & 6), which was only just announced before the TGS. We'll have reviews for all of these next month.

The big surprise of the show was Front Mission 3 (PICS 2 & 3), which was even playable. Set to come out this summer, this third installment in Square's strategic mech warfare simulation series looks even better than before, with full 3D graphics. A few minutes of play wasn't enough to put it through its paces, but it appears that a variety of new modes and game play features have been added.



EIGHT THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE TGS! - No.6: STAGE DANCERS: The trend for dancers on one's booth has pretty much become the norm, although thankfully Capcom and Square haven't succumbed yet. This show's award goes to (A) Enix and their Bust a Move 2 dance group for a truly entertaining performance. (B) Namco, (C) Banpresto and (D) Tecmo were great as well.



(C) 1998, 1999 NAMCO LTD, (C) SQUARE

★ KONAMI THE DANCE WAVE COMMETH

Although towards the back of their booth Konami did have a wide range of other games on display, it was clear from the start that the biggest game they had was Dance Dance Revolution. Most of the booth had long rows of DDR units lined up ready to play, and there was even an arcade version of Dance Dance Revolution 2nd Mix on hand, presumably to remind people that a forthcoming Playstation sequel is already in development. In tune with the general theme of the booth, the main reception counter was also designed to resemble a giant DDR cabinet, which people had to step on in order to get their goodies bag. With various incarnations of Beatmania and Pop 'n' Music also for the PlayStation, Wonder Swan and Game Boy, it's clear that, for the time being, Konami's consumer division is simply following the lead of its Arcade counterpart.



★ ENIX MUST A MOVE 2 DANCES ITS WAY ONTO THE SCENE.....



The faithful gathered in front of a giant reproduction of a Japanese shrine (as featured in the Dragon Quest New Year TV commercial) to hear comforting words from the development team that DQVII really would be coming out this year – maybe. There's nothing really new in terms of content, and a little worrying that there's still no playable version available. But who knows – when it comes out, maybe it'll be ready for the Playstation 2.



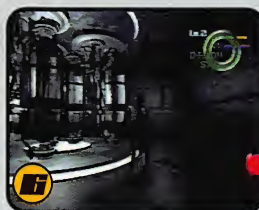
The biggest game at the show for Enix was naturally Bust a Move 2, but they also had a new SF adventure RPG called Planet Laika for the PS, which is being developed by Quintet. Also featured was the fun-to-play Pop'n Tanks.

★ ASCII ALIENS, CONSPIRACIES, AND WORLD DOMINATION

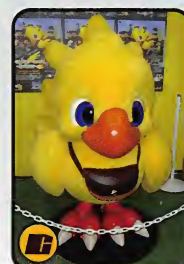
It's strange how ASCII often seem to be overlooked when it comes to TGS show reports, but they always have an interesting lineup of games on display. This time they had two playable games of particular note. Galerians is a 3D psychic adventure set in Earth's future, where the Mother Computer has created a group of artificial people called the Galerians to take control of the human race. You

play a hero who must battle against them to save mankind.

UFO, a comical alien investigation variety game from the makers of Moon, has you searching for your lost friend on the planet Earth. You must beam down, take photos of strange objects and report back to your leader.



EIGHT THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE TGS! No.7 - CUTE CHARACTERS: While the guys go after all the companions, it's left to the sweet and adorable characters to appeal to the women and children. This year saw Capcom's Kobun (A), aliens from UFO (B), Chocobo (C) and Mr. TGS himself (D) take top honors for cuteability!



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★TAITO.....

Chaos Heat is the first of Taito's arcade games running on their PS-based G-NET hardware to be ported to the Playstation. Although only on video, first indications are that it is going to be an almost perfect arcade copy with some great CG movies to go along with it. This now opens the door for some other excellent conversions as well, with such titles as Ray Crisis, Super Puzzle Bobble and Go by RC.



All the other games on display were already on sale, so there was little else to really get excited about, although news just in hints at a new Psychic Force game coming to the PlayStation in August. More news on this hot title next month.

★SCE.....



As the sign says, there was nothing at the TGS to do with the new PlayStation 2 at all, but not that many people seemed to be particularly interested in it anyway. Most of the crowds seemed to be more than happy watching Um Jammer Lammy playing live on stage or queuing for an hour to get 10 minutes play time on Omega Boost. Is this all Sony Computer Entertainment have to do to match the power of Sega's Dreamcast?

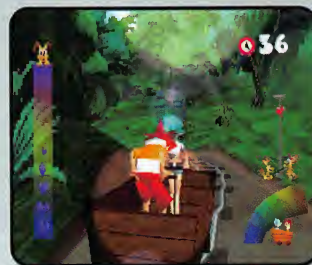


★HUMAN...

Taking a break from all their horror adventure games, Human have decided to go for a giant robot battling game called Remote Control Dandy. In some respects it appears to mimic Godzilla Generations on the Dreamcast as your larger than life robot, towering over the city, destroys buildings left, right and center, but this is where the similarity ends. Controlling your 50-meter tall robot by remote control, you must battle against evil robots that are trying to take over the world. However, you must do so without damaging the city, as all the repair bills are paid out of your savings!



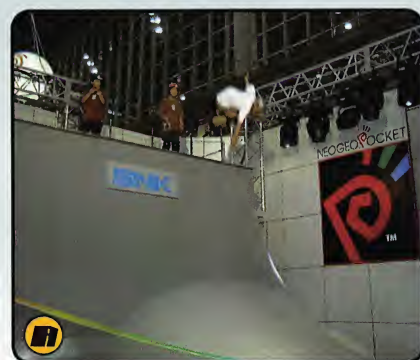
★TYO.....



The TGS was the debut of a new computer game company, TYO. Previously engaged in CM production and movie special effects (such as *Gamera 3*), they have now decided to turn their hand to games and already have an impressive line up of six PlayStation titles in development, one of which, *Love Love Truck*, is coming this summer.

★BANDAI VISUAL

While true that Bandai Visual are notorious for their wasted attempts to capitalize on their great anime licenses, one has to admire them for their persistency. This time they're not only giving us *Macross VF-X 2* and *Macross Do You Remember Love?*, they also have a *Patlabor* game in development. As always, they look visibly stunning, but I wouldn't reserve your copy until we find out how it plays.



EIGHT THINGS YOU OUGHT TO KNOW ABOUT THE TGS! No.8 - OTHER CRAZY STUFF: Never underestimate the TGS's ability to amaze! (A) SNK's stage is a massive half pipe. (B) Our guy in Japan gets his photo taken with Chocobo (C) Life-size Tokimeki Dolls on sale at \$3K fixed and \$4K movable! (D) Capcom show off the guns in Biohazard and Dino Crisis.





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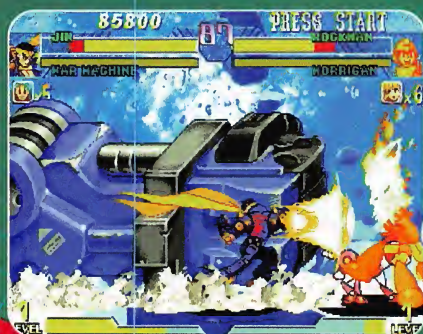
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MARVEL VS. CAPCOM

BY BRADY FIECHTER

2-D insanity hits the dreamcast
capcom provides a rare arcade-perfect translation



For a system bred to build expansive 3D worlds comprised of millions of polygons, the Dreamcast is pleasingly unperturbed by the task of interpreting a 2D arcade behemoth like Marvel Vs. Capcom. What we have here is a perfect port of one of the most animation-intensive arcade fighting games – a testament to the

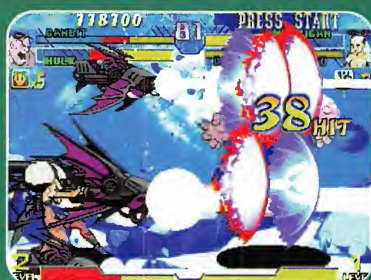
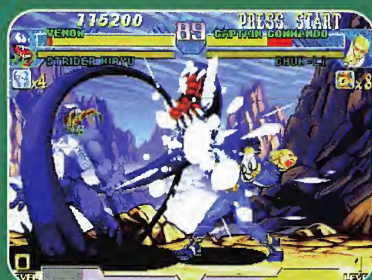
brawny 2D capabilities of Sega's much-scrutinized 128-bit hardware.

One of the more unique and widely appealing aspects of Marvel Vs. Capcom is the eclectic gathering of fighters, which ranges from Marvel icons like the Incredible Hulk and Spiderman to Capcom greats like Strider Hiryu and Mega Man. Following the same manic fighting style found in past "Vs." games, Marvel Vs. Capcom allows you to battle in teams of two, switching back and forth throughout the match in a tag-team fashion. When the charge on the super meter has risen high enough, your partner can be called in to com-

plete a super move or, if all three levels are charged, both characters can fight simultaneously – a technique new to Marvel Vs. Capcom. Also new to the game are the very cool helper attacks. These are executed by a simple press of both medium attack buttons, which calls in one of 22 random secondary characters who are also from the Capcom and Marvel universe: Arthur from Ghosts 'N' Goblins launches an onslaught of spears; Cyclops sears the opponent with a bolt of energy.

All the typical Capcom fighting-game modes and options exist in Marvel Vs. Capcom, but one of the more original additions to come a long in quite some time is the cross fever mode, in which four players can take control of a fighter, tagging in once a teammate has bowed out.

With the somewhat mechanical, combo-heavy fighting propelled by a furious pacing, it's only fitting to watch the screen ignite with scintillating effects and a flurry of animations as the fighters continually employ their dramatic list of moves. Whether you enjoy the flashy, somewhat haphazard style of Marvel Vs. Capcom or gravitate to a more focused, precision-based fighter like Street Fighter, take a look at this game when it hits U.S. shores if only to see the Dreamcast masterfully show its 2D capabilities.



4

CI-O1

(Top) Strider Hiryu, one of the coolest characters in the game, is a master of the sword. (Bottom) Insane combos embody the M Vs. C experience. 38-hit combos are only the beginning.



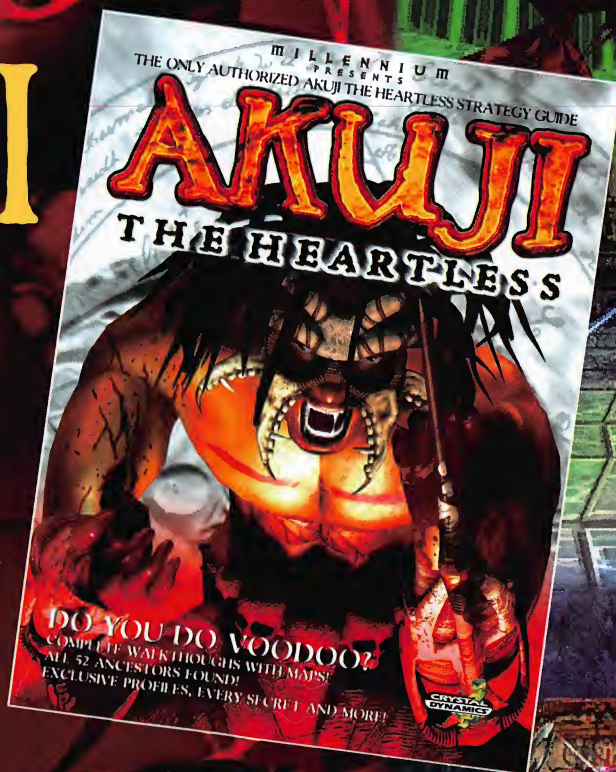
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the house of the dead 2

BY MIKE HOBBS

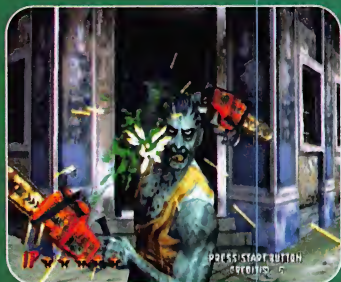
arcade perfection...



dreamcast

1101001

model 3 is no stretch for this beauty of a dreamcast game



We've come a long way from the Zapper and Duck Hunt. Sega's amazing arcade-to-Dreamcast conversion of *The House of the Dead 2*, just released in Japan, has been confirmed as a domestic near-launch title, and it's exactly the kind of graphically intensive, fast action game that can firmly ensconce the Dreamcast into the minds of potential and much-needed buyers.

As the second Model 3 conversion to come to Dreamcast (VF being the other), Sega are dutifully beginning to deliver on the promise of producing perfect arcade ports. Indeed, the illusion of playing a multi-thousand-dollar arcade game has never been achieved so convincingly. The frame rate in HOTD 2 is a constant, buttery 60, and the overall texture quality is astounding, both in its design and in the Dreamcast's ability to display them in shimmering 640x480 resolution. This is an incredible looking game, but more importantly, also an extremely well designed one.

Belying its arcade heritage, the pace of HOTD 2 is manic as you race from one richly detailed

environment to the next. Zombies leap at you from all sides, charging in close to give you a good look at their gruesomely drawn textures before getting the top half of their heads blown off in a shower of green goo. If that's not enough, you can knock off arms or put holes in zombie's chests the size of basketballs. But more than just blasting apart enemies at point blank range, you'll need to develop a keen accuracy to pick off more distant, moving targets, especially those about to pounce on innocent bystanders. Thanks in part to the brilliant design work of the original arcade team, this is both hugely fun and massively challenging.

Apart from a probable blood color switch from green to red, *The House of the Dead 2* should remain unchanged for its domestic release. It's a strong title that should prove invaluable in shifting Dreamcasts during the first months of the hardware launch. And stopping short of giving it a final review, I'll offer up that it's easily the most challenging and deviously fun light gun game ever to come to a home console, and thanks to the DC's power, overflowing with graphical goodness. >X=



While the accuracy of the Dreamcast Gun is slightly debatable, there's no debate as to the stunning graphics of this Model 3 conversion. You are playing an arcade game.





LIGHT GUN

The Dreamcast's futuristic light gun is a wonderfully balanced delight and shod with interesting detailing. Immediately noticeable is the cleverly placed joypad (identical the stock controller's slightly misaligned cross) perched atop the grip. Though its only use in *The House of the Dead 2* is in navigating through menus, future games will no doubt make some use of the opportunities afforded by its inclusion. Flanking this pad are two rubber buttons, a "B" and "Start."

Lending the gun its good feel and balance is the positioning of a slot above the joypad. You can slide in either a VMS or a Puru Puru Pack, and both counterbalance the barrel nicely. And although the Dreamcast Gun doesn't seem to be quite as accurate as Namco's direct-video-sampling GunCon, it certainly works well enough and looks appropriately spacey.



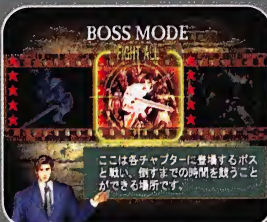
TRAINING MODE

The only thing harder than *The House of the Dead 2* game is the Dreamcast-exclusive Training Modes. Here, your shooting skills are put to an extreme test through ten different trials.

Some of the more devious events have you blasting zombies off of a succession of fast-moving and - weaving cars, keeping a coin up in the air for up to 50 seconds, and quickly picking out the undead from the living while the camera whip-pans to the left. Each trial has five stages of difficulty, with the completion tolerances slightly ramped up every level. One rapid-fire trial, which requires you to constantly blast the level-one boss, strains your trigger finger to the point of seizure on its fifth level of difficulty. These training modes elicited more cries of triumph and frustration from the GR staff than any game in recent memory. It's a king-sized challenge, and one that rewards with game-enhancing items for use in the main game's Original Mode.



BOSS MODE



Not to be outdone by the difficulty of training, the Boss mode offers up yet more challenge as you perfect your boss-killing technique. Like the Training Mode, you earn stars for each time you successfully destroy a boss character. The insanity begins in the final trial of this mode where you must put down each boss (including the alternate patterns for three of the bosses) successively with no continues. When we first saw this, we reckoned the task to be impossible. With a little, no make that a lot, of perseverance, we put them all down. Only the sharpest of shooters will be able to even come close to finishing this mode.





climax landers

the dreamcast's second rpg is in full effect

Unlike Sting's Evolution, which is still uncertain, Climax Landers is definitely on its way to the US later this fall. Sega themselves will be at the helm of this Japanese conversion, and they appear to be dedicating a generous amount of time and talent to the process. Let's hope so: Climax' games have always done well in this country, and considering its enormous potential, Landers should be no different.

First and foremost, one should pay close attention to Climax Landers' gorgeous polygo-

nal environments. Although Climax have opted to treat each area as its own separate and unique "pocket" (giant landscapes aren't linked together), the speed, resolution, and sheer complexity of these areas is mind numbing. The loading is so quick between said zones that you'll barely notice the change, with the kind of gorgeous imagery assaulting your senses that only Climax's talented artists can provide.

We can't wait to test drive this game at E3, where we'll get to grips with the quest itself. ✧



geist force

sega of america's first dreamcast title makes an appearance



When the Dreamcast was first unveiled at a Sega E3 conference at last year's E3 in Atlanta, Geist Force was the only American-developed title on display. The usual hyperbole surrounding an early technology demo was as heavy as the crushing southern summer air: Geist Force looked questionably amazing, seemed to defy hardware expectations, and was said to only skim the surface of the Dreamcast's capabilities.

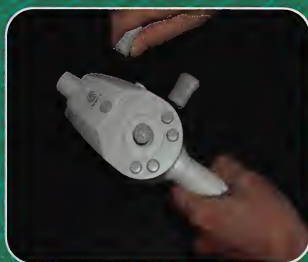
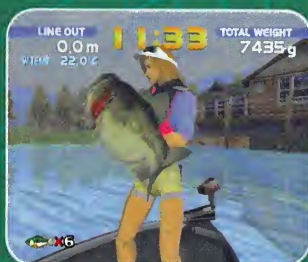
Demos for a new cutting-edge hardware are exciting, a tantalizing sneak peak into the next wave of gaming, but an actual game running on actual hardware is where the truth is finally told: Geist Force is indeed amazing. At least in theory. The game is still early, but it's heading down an impressively ambitious design path. Spanning five enormous environments consisting of hundreds of miles of 3D terrain, Geist Force throws the player into a sci-fi conflict where story and furious action work in tandem: gamers will find themselves involved in five separate relationship outcomes as they assume the role of Rook, an irascible young fighter pilot out to save his world and the one he loves. If the story falls into a pit of banality, the action and revolutionary engine will hopefully carry the game: for the first time in a console title, the player's ship and environmental objects react to the force given off by 3D particle effects, which exhibit realistic physics. Isn't new technology grand? ✧





get bass

bait the hook like a master with sega's big mouth fishing



Having enjoyed huge arcade success in Japan, Get Bass comes to Dreamcast and blesses the system with its second funky peripheral. The ASCII-made fishing-rod device, which features a built in rumble but no VMS slot, does a good job of replicating the feel of the arcade game while providing a good old fashioned dose of gimmickry for DC players.

Basically an arcade perfect port, Get Bass on Dreamcast adds a Consumer Mode, allowing for an extended tournament style game experience. The Arcade Mode is for fast thrills, as you must reach a certain weight by catching as many fish as possible as a timer counts down.

Graphically, Get Bass doesn't stretch the capabilities of the hardware to any huge degree, but still represents the best looking game of home fishing yet seen. The underwater effect, in which you can see light refractions moving realistically on the lake floor, is a treat, as are the well-textured and -animated big mouth bass models. Above water, things are looking good with detailed environments and rich colors.

There are grumblings that Get Bass is too simple of a fishing game, but considering its heritage as an arcade title, this is not surprising. And even with its straightforward intentions, plenty of relaxing and sometimes frantic fun is to be had with Sega's action-oriented take on big mouth bass fishing. It should find plenty of fans on these shores. >*

d2

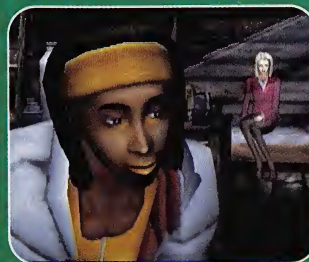
our first hands-on test reveals film-quality camera direction

So much was veiled in mystery regarding Warp's real-time D sequel. Although Kenji Eno's plans appeared to be solid and ambitious – as is the case with so many cinematic adventures – following through with such bold intent tends to be too demanding. Well, based on the D2 shock demo included with Warp's Real Sound 2, it seems as though our worries were completely unfounded.

The D2 shock demo includes a tiny, classy sound test of D2's glorious,

beautiful soundtrack, a short playable demo of the snowmobile scene, the first battle scene (on board the crashed plane), and a stunning demo of the soon-to-be-infamous cabin scene.

After witnessing these three levels/scenarios, it's clear that Kenji Eno (for all of his apparent public ego) is a brilliant director and incredible musician. The cabin scene, more than any, demonstrates his mastery over the real-time camera. The full game could be a horror masterpiece. >*



super speed racing

high speeds of cart racing come to pc

We've said it before, and we'll say it again: the games make the system. Sega are already padding the Dreamcast launch with key titles across multiple genres, with Super Speed Racing carrying the weight of the racing category.

In a mountain of visually dazzling titles vying to attract gamers' attention, Super Speed Racing is certainly not one of the more impressive Dreamcast offerings, but what it lacks in pizzazz it attempts to make up for in gameplay. Fast and immensely playable, this entertaining CART title eschews the complex physics found in this style of racing for a more arcade-like feel and pacing. Damage to the cars can be turned on or off, but whether in Arcade or Championship mode, the handling of these powerful machines is meant to be tight and forgiving, appealing more to a casual racing fan.

Spanning more than 18 authentic courses traversed by many of the well-known CART competitors, Super Speed Racing pits 27 cars on the track at once for plenty of white-knuckle racing. A wealth of options exist, from the tweaking of the cars to the time of day, weather, and lap length. With solid, basic mechanics and a competent engine, Super Speed Racing should make for a pleasing launch title this September. >*





Carrier

BY MIKE GRIFFIN

more pc horrors

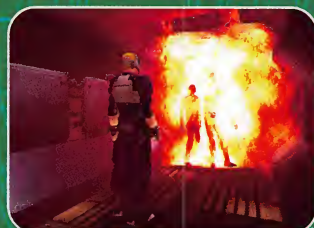
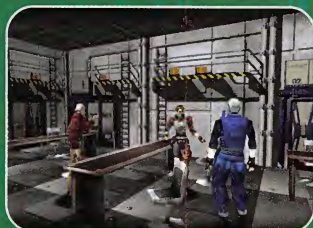
Jaleco add a new twist to the genre

Jaleco's *Carrier* is the story of Jack, who defies a mysterious entity called "Ark" that has taken over an advanced military carrier called Heimdal. On board the ship, players will have to overcome unknown carnivorous plants, innocent crew members transformed into moaning zombies, and the enigma surrounding both the vessel's take over and the disappearance of Jack's brother.

Carrier is a pure horror adventure game that emphasizes the dramatic effects of fear. Three crucial (yet basic) stage effects are included in the game: First of all, you will be alone in a terrifying aircraft carrier in the middle of the ocean without assistance from the outside world. Secondly, you feel as if you are not only fighting a very physical enemy force but also the power of the Ark

and its considerable and sinister energy. Countless innocents must be destroyed, and this injustice cannot be tolerated. Lastly, you can't trust anyone on the ship because in addition to merging with the crew, the enemy force can also manipulate practically any other intelligent organism.

To find out if you are dealing with the force of Ark, Jack's most useful tool is a modified Scope that enables you to see "through" the enemy to determine if it is evil or not. You can also use the Scope to see through walls to find hidden corridors, items (like security cards, etc.), or entry points. However, the scope is not necessarily the perfect tool to view precisely what you are dealing with; sometimes, depending upon creature type, the scope cannot detect the enemy within




real-time environments captivate merged with unique camera angles and special effects



because it cannot trace the specific characteristics of the organism. In other words, the element of surprise is heightened by the fact that you can often detect the enemy – but not always.

If you're going to be blasting away Ark's hordes, it's time for us to go over *Carrier*'s weapon system. Only four weapons will be made available to Jack over the course of his mission on board the Heimdal: A hunting knife, the E.H 9-mm handgun, West Cobra machine guns, and TNT-based T-7 bombs. Most of the monsters you encounter cannot be knocked down with a knife and a flick of the wrist. What you need to do – and it's the most efficient way of eliminating monsters – is to set up a T-7 bomb while defending yourself from the hordes by using the handgun or machine gun. Since the bomb detonates in a just few seconds, you have to keep out of the explosion radius to avoid injury, while still luring the creatures into its midst. These valuable bombs can also destroy walls, leading to new areas. By combining the use of comparatively ineffective guns and hyper-effective bombs, Jaleco is attempting to provide thrilling, strategic battles against the monsters.

Jack's only other advantage will be the five other NPC team members that communicate and interact with you throughout the mission. They are each proficient in various military fields, and without their help you can't complete the game. Ah, but Ark is a powerful entity in control of everything on the ship, so you might have to fight monsters disguised as your own team members! We'll have even more *Carrier* information soon, including news on a possible U.S. translation in the works. 



agetec previews

Newly formed Agetec have already acquired an impressive quiver of Japanese wares for their first year as video game publishers. Especially exciting, of course, is the amazing R-Type Delta, which takes PlayStation shooters to new heights. From Software's Ecco Night is also highly acclaimed. Maybe they'll buy Hermie...

r-type delta

Irem's R-Type Delta is one of the best-looking 2.5D shooters ever to be released, and thanks to Agetec, on its way to the States. Intricately constructed levels and big weapon effects conspire to produce this shooter fan's delight. Even better than the scintillating graphics, however, is that this still feels like an R-Type game – a greatly enhanced one mind you, but the classic feeling is there. You've still got the Option pod and the bits, but now you have different ships to choose from, each with a unique main weapon and appearance.



rising zan

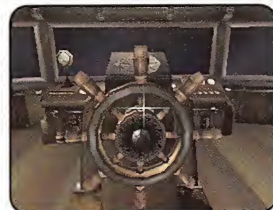
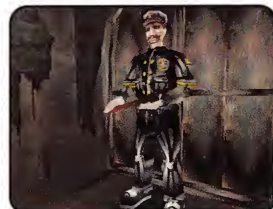


Zan is trained by Ninja master Suzuki after a squad of Ninja's slice and dice him, his dad, and the town from whence he rode. Vowing revenge, Zan, gun in one hand, sword in the other, takes out after them gosh-dern Ninjas to bring justice back to the west. After an extended training stint in which the game's many tactics are exemplified, Zan takes to the dusty streets and opens up a can of whoop-ass on all manner of Mad Max-style Ninja thugs. As the game progresses, the many tactics Zan learned in training will come into play. From UEP systems (makers of the original Coolboarders), Rising Zan is gaming's first spaghetti western.



ecco night

From Software's atmospheric Ecco Night is getting a shot at stateside stardom. In this adventure game, players will embark on a mysterious journey back in time to learn the secrets of their father's past life. Look for great visual variety here as you'll get to travel across three different eras in history on your quest. An old fashioned casino, subterranean mines, a ghost ship, and an ancient castle are just some of the locations you'll traverse. Over 50 mini-games and puzzles await in this 3D adventure.



shadow tower

Resembling the style and atmosphere of the King's Field series, Shadow Tower is a first-person action/adventure title that is wisely searching for heavy ambience through its creation of a dark, medieval world. Descending what might be described as an inverted tower, the player penetrates deeper and deeper into dungeon-like pits, meeting up with a host of creatures. When an enemy is encountered, it's logged in a journal and can then be confronted in 3D battle areas, turning the game into a Tekken-like fighter.



bass landing

Historically, fishing games have proven to be surprisingly popular, as players really seem to enjoy casting out in the comfort of their own homes. Agetec are poised to satisfy this market with Bass Landing, a game that promises to provide a very realistic and fun game of fishing, with massive lakes to choose from and tons of different fish to catch. To be included is a dedicated fishing controller for the ultimate in couch casting. Look for a review and a hands-on test of their fishing controller in an upcoming issue.



SONY E3 PREVIEW

The PlayStation 2 will undoubtedly be the conversation piece of this year's E3, but before we all get excited over a system that's over a year away, let's not forget the PlayStation is alive and very, very well. Here is just a glimpse of what's to come.

TINY TANK



Stunted by a poor frame rate, the release of Tiny Tank was halted to make time for necessary improvements. Now Sony is taking the facetious tank under its wing to fully realize the game's great premise.



APE ESCAPE



Specter the ape leads his fellow imprisoned baboons on a bold zoo escape. To quell the uprising, you must master a wealth of unique play mechanics and find your way through 7 worlds, in the first 3D action/platformer to fully utilize Dual Shock.



CRASH BANDICOOT RACING



Whether you loved Crash 3 or not (but you gotta' love him), there's no arguing that the winsome bandicoot is a premium that deserves to show up outside of his familiar stomping grounds. And here he is, in his first combat racer. We can't wait for this one.

SPYRO THE DRAGON 2

One of the best-looking and -playing 3D action/platformers of '98 is returning with 30 new worlds for the endearing Spyro to explore. In his first outing, Spyro primarily glided and fire-breathed his way through the gorgeous levels, but now he can swim, climb, super-charge and ground stomp for a much more involved experience.



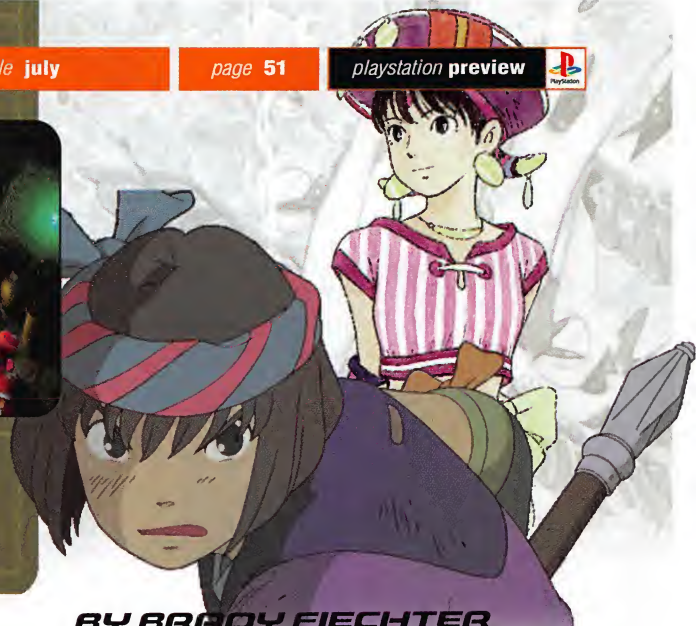
TARZAN

Take to the trees, tame the elephants, swim in beautiful pools of water and explore the depths of vast jungles as the young Tarzan matures from a vigorous youth to a fearless adult. A number of gameplay scenarios take Tarzan through the 14 environments as he battles the indigenous creatures.





RGS-17301



BY BRADY FIECHTER

JADE COCOON

Born in Japan and opportunely transplanted to American soil by Crave Entertainment, the beautiful and original Jade Cocoon is the next offering in the ballooning list of role playing games vying to carry the PlayStation into the final chapter of the 32-bit era.

Those who have played the import version of Jade Cocoon can attest to its striking visual presence. Like the great Final Fantasy VII, the game's world is displayed by detailed prerendered backgrounds that create an imaginative, wonderfully involving atmosphere. Grounded in an exceptionally ethereal quality, the look of Jade Cocoon is underpinned by the character design and art direction of Katsuya Kondoh, the renowned anime artist whose works include *Kiki's Delivery Service*, *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Princess Mononoke*, the highest grossing Japanese film of all time. To heighten the story telling, Kondoh has also lent his richly unique style to form remarkably detailed anime cut scenes.

Placed within the familiar confines of RPG storytelling, Levant, the young boy forced to contend with the crushing weight of a tumultuous

world, must venture outside his village and do battle with a host of monsters lurking in the outlying woods. It is in these confrontations that the game moves into the most original territory, drawing combat strategies from a summoning system. Known in the game as a cocoon hunter, Levant can incapacitate the enemy with the magical song of a flute, imprisoning it in a cocoon. Once the cocoon has been purified, the monster can be released into battle as a key source of offense. Most enemies Levant faces possess one of the four elements of fire, earth, air and water, and, of course, to leave a battle victorious, efficiently understanding a property's strengths and weakness is paramount. To breed more powerful and unique creatures, captured foes can be combined in countless ways, thereby altering specialized attributes and abilities accordingly.

Though the preview of Jade Cocoon afforded only a distant glimpse into its mystic world, what little I saw bred a supreme anticipation for the final English translation. If first impressions really do matter, Jade Cocoon will be the surprise companion to Final Fantasy VIII.✱



TOWN
SHOP



たままゆものがたり



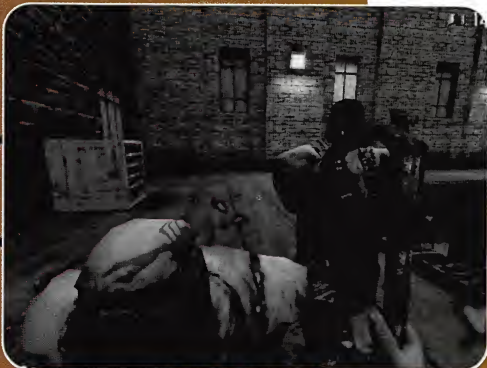
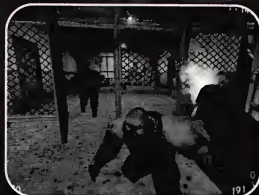
Koris
Ah-ha! So, the son of Kiketsu is even more capable than I had thought.





KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME


BY ERIC PRATTE

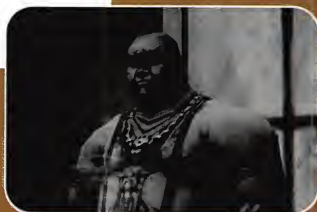
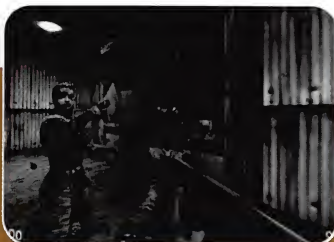


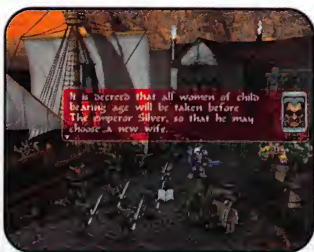
Pulling yourself up from a pool of your own blood, you are forced to listen to the thugs who beat you down as they spout out the cruel reason why they didn't just bury your sorry ass. In no uncertain terms—while making sure to include many politically incorrect ones—thug number one explains that you're alive so that the memory of this beating will haunt you. Defying the gods of gravity and common sense, you raise to your feet in a daze and locate a pipe within a seeping cloud of thick fumes, oozing from a neighboring garbage bin. As you regain consciousness, you vow to kick the "ahem" out of your assailants, and relieve yourself on whatever's left afterwards.

This is how Interplay's ingenious gans-ta-tale begins. With you at the bottom of the underground ladder, you can only descend deeper into the depths of lawless luxury. *Kingpin: Life of Crime* is a no-holds-barred drive-by on the increasingly stagnant first-person shooter market. Foul language, fouler residents, and the combination of stereotypical African-

American and Italian-American slum life create quite a different look from *Quake 2*, the game *Kingpin* borrows its amazing engine from.

Xatrix Entertainment have utilized id Software-created engines to produce quality games in the past, but they have gone all-out for this "OG" title. COOL looking models (burly, vascular men and skank babes), advanced AI (enemies fight together and call for help when hurt), an advanced dialogue system where you can make friends or enemies with a few simple cuss words, and a thoughtfully rendered, graffiti-laden slum environment are all here for the taking. A violent mob-story-style plot that encourages an overdose of rampant gunfights (leaving gun-hole-ridden and sometimes dismembered carcasses) and fast life-and-death decisions are yet more examples of the game's high points, but the final nail in *Kingpin*'s coffin of greatness is the acquisition of the musical mad-skills of the infamous Cypress Hill who lay-down the suppressing urban bass-line! More soon... 





An intricate and atmospheric role playing game vies to supersede the best of the genre on PC

The modern RPG, with prerendered backgrounds, super-deformed characters, and epic plots, was born and scientifically engineered by the alchemists at Square. However, whenever a benchmark title enjoys the kind of success that Final Fantasy 7 did, the game design quickly becomes a new canvas for other developers to paint, in an attempt to whew the newly established audience. It's the nature of any industry.

Silver, developed by esteemed Hollanders Funcom (Dirt), is an epic role-playing adventure built somewhat on the impressive FF7 framework (polygonal characters among prerendered bgs), but the characters at work here are more sophisticated and the battles are real-time rather than turn based. To compete favorably with the substandard PC version of FF7 (I suppose), Funcom have created a fluidly animated epic filled with natural sounds and visual realism in a European-style sword and sorcery universe.

The real-time battles are handled by a mouse and keyboard system in which the mouse manipulates the hands of one of your party's characters, and spell-casting origi-

nates from the magical orbs in your possession or from the occasional magical item.

Based on our short demo, the story appears to be quite enthralling. As David, you set out to save your wife from a diabolical and deadly archmage named Silver, after she is rounded up along with the rest of the town's ladies for the unnatural selection of Silver's next tormented bride. Along the way you lose your trainer and grandfather to the leather-skinned, lizard-voiced Fuge, Silver's cursed heir, and learn of another regrettable product of the necromancer: an apocalyptic plot to rule the world. But our high-strung hero will have none of this tomfoolery and sets out to reprise an ancient prophecy. By obtaining eight enchanted orbs, he will be blessed with enough immortality to battle Silver on equal ground.



SILVER





From the creators of Bonks Adventure, Super Tempo, and Sakura Taisen...
Red's crowning achievement is an RPG like no other for the PlayStation

THOUSAND ARMS

BY DAVE HALVERSON



Here we are again, on the brink of yet another memorable RPG for the PlayStation. As its nearly five-year reign closes in on legendary status, we have yet to embark on such inspired role playing sagas as Jade Cocoon, Suikoden II, Final Fantasy VIII, Saga Frontier 2 and, of course, Thousand Arms—Atlus' most ambitious U.S. localization in their 10-year history as a U.S. publisher. Before they acquired Thousand Arms, it was in the hands of distinguished Japanese developer Red (Bonks Adventure, Super Tempo, Sakura Taisen) for nearly three years. Clearly, when Red set out to make Thousand Arms, they set their sights on creating a truly



TA's masterful conversation engine. Exaggerated overworld characters become fully animated during key confrontations.



Red spared no expense developing *Thousand Arms*... And Atlus are set to deliver a perfect localization

memorable and unique role-playing experience. Still, even when a concept is this fresh, the knowledge that the game you are embarking on will not be in gamer's hands for some three years from its inception must be difficult to ponder. But Red's investment has paid off, evident the moment you hear the inspiring J-Pop theme by Ayumi Hamasaki accompanied by one of the most moving RPG overtures I've seen and heard since the old Wolfteam days ("Game creative staff, Wolfteam"). By combining beautifully realized polygonal environments with super-deformed anime-style characters who spring to life during the game's 12 hours of spoken dialogue, Red have created a look that is on par with *Xenogears* and *Grandia*, while unique to both. The battle system, reminiscent of a turn-based *Guardian Heroes*, melds hand-drawn bliss with vibrant polygonal environments and impressive spell effects for a thoroughly unique look and feel. Integrated throughout, the anime sequences alone must have taken the better part of a year to complete, and are stunning to behold. I can't remember the last time I saw original anime clips this refined for a video game.

Red didn't stop at the visual presentation, though. They have also created a unique battle engine and leveling-up system called "The Meister System." Rather than gaining experience through hit points (HP), you are able to endow weapons with elemental characteristics, and through chance encounters, you will learn special attacks and spells. From top to bottom *Thousand Arms* looks to have everything it takes to break into the big time. The only element left to chance is the story, which I cannot yet critique since the game is still pretty much all in Japanese. But judging by the looks on Meis Triumphs face (now there's a name for a lead character!) the drama should be overflowing. ⚡



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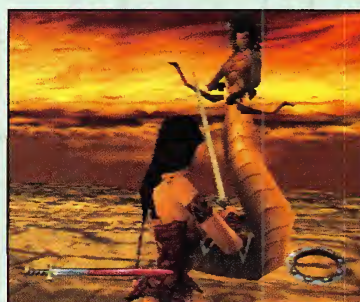
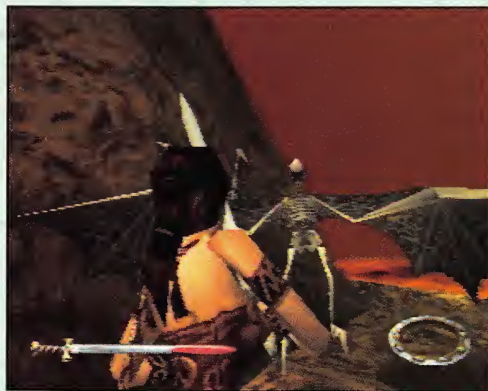
XENA: Warrior princess

DEVELOPER: 989 Studios PUBLISHER: AVAILABLE: August



I'm man enough to admit it... I watch the WB. Batman Beyond, assorted toons, and of course Xena the queen of Medieval (once in awhile) just to scope out Lucy Lawless' latest apparel or lack thereof. And so it is with much anticipation I await the PlayStation game that bares the same name. Now personally, I envision a Xena game coming off better in luscious hand drawn 2D, although it seems that 989 studios are doing a fine job following every curve of Xena's taut frame in 3D. Remaining true to the series the gameplay in Xena promises to combine elements from fighting and adventure gaming. So besides galavanting across the magical terrain hacking and slashing her prey, Xena takes the time to stop and strategically slice them in to piles of quivering stew as well. Strategic defense maneuvers also come into play as Xena possesses skills that put the enemy down but don't kill them. Through this technique she is able to build "Karma points" which can be used to master new moves and gain power-ups.

With seven vast worlds to explore and over thirty techniques to master Xena seems ready for gamedom. The shots pictured, supplied to us by 989, seem to depict only boss encounters and I must say they look pretty impressive. We haven't actually seen the game in action however so you'll have to wait until next month's E3 report for information on how Xena plays. Xena is currently due to roll in to stores this August. While we're on the subject, the Xena action figures are intense. Check 'em out. ⚡



DEMOLITION RACER

DEVELOPER: Pitbull Syndicate PUBLISHER: Accolade AVAILABLE: Summer



Demolition Racer is Accolade's hot new comer in the action-racing genre. Following their driving success with Test Drive 4 & 5, Pitbull Syndicate are once again in charge of development, this time using a modified Test Drive 5 engine to bring promising concept into polygonal reality.

The solid engine is now used for displaying level structures like the Bowl and Pitbull Syndicate have gone in and adapted it to display a wide range of animated car damage as well. Exciting stages, Tommy T. and Fear Factory in charge of sounds, and tons of modes are just a few of the aspects working to ensure that Demolition Racer boasts nothing less than excellent results. ⚡



SLAVE ZERO

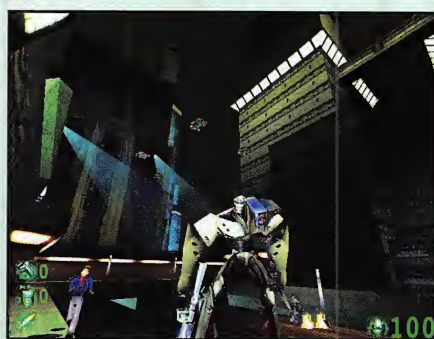
DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: Accolade AVAILABLE: Summer



Slave Zero is primed to be a huge PC and Dreamcast title from Accolade. By combining an insane level of detail and well-orchestrated action scenarios, this is a serious mech game deserving of your attention.

One characteristic of Slave Zero that comes across amazingly well is the scale of the environment in relation to your mech. Slave Zero is 65 feet of mechanized power, and this proportion is conveyed to great effect as you pound your way through massive environments: Huge objects will become playthings for your well equipped one-Mech army.

This effect is brought to the senses thanks to the impressive, all-new Ecstasy Engine. Slave Zero itself is really well modeled, environment mapped, gouraud shaded, multi-textured, and adaptively animated. Just wait until you see the huge bastard jetting around, grabbing, launching into the air, hoisting huge objects as if they were light as air. It's a sight! ⚡



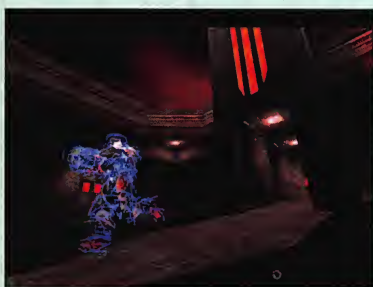
QUAKE III: ARENA

DEVELOPER: id PUBLISHER: Activision AVAILABLE: May



You can literally hear keyboards around the country trembling in anticipation of probably the only game that can unseat the almighty Quake II as the king of Deathmatch. Yes kids, it's Quake III Arena. To hear it from id CEO Todd Hollenshead, "Quake III Arena is the greatest Deathmatch game [we] have ever created." Normally, that comment would be considered a load of empty hyperbole, but considering the indisputable evidence that is Quake II, said comment only makes the wait that much more unbearable.

Apart from the sure-to-astound Deathmatch and massively upgraded graphics featuring curved surfaces, specular lighting, and the most advanced dedicated 3D support, QIII also features reportedly stunning AI. The one-player game is said to feel like a live Deathmatch, with computer-controlled characters reacting like sentient, hard-core players. The proof will be in the pudding, but I'd prepare for some of the best fps action ever if I were you. >#<



VAMPIRE

DEVELOPER: Nihilistic Software PUBLISHER: Activision AVAILABLE: Fall



White Wolf Publishing's long running pen and paper Vampire role playing game is entering the realm of 3D with Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption. Developers Nihilistic Software (some members of which were responsible for Jedi Knight, Descent, and Requiem) are attempt-

ing to recreate the traditional role-playing-game experience on a "digital table top" with the use of a simple mouse-only interface and advanced 3D engine.

Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption follows the exploits of one Christof of Romuald, a medieval knight of Prague. This action/role-playing feast spans eight hundred years and four different cities, including New York, London, and Vienna. Underlying the action will be an engrossing story said to be up to the standards set by White Wolf Publishing's highly regarded World of Darkness series of fiction. With its accelerated 3D graphics, scads of NPCs to interact with, challenging puzzles, and multiplayer options, Vampire: The Masquerade should garner serious attention as its fall release draws near. >#<



VIGILANTE 8 SECOND OFFENSE

DEVELOPER: Luxoflux PUBLISHER: Activision AVAILABLE: Fall



Many a gamer is drooling right now, in anticipation of this potentially MASSIVE sequel to one of the finest vehicular combat game ever conceived. The biggest news of all, however, is that V8: Second Offense is not only in development for the PS and N64, but also the Dreamcast.

Even as this is being written, Second Offense is being outfitted with entirely new and original off-road arenas based on strange US locations. Inside sources have said that the terrain engine looks amazing on DC, flying along at 60fps in stunning 640x480 high res. We should expect profound enhancements to the all-new vehicle models and terrain on PS and N64 as well, and yes, it will support Nintendo's 4 Meg Pak again (hopefully with better frame rates this time!). Now, the only question that remains is whether or not Luxoflux will be given the go-ahead to include an on-line option for DC gamers. Activision would be foolish to ignore such an obvious opportunity... You can count on GR for huge coverage of what is sure to be an awesome game. >#<



WU-TANG

DEVELOPER: Paradox PUBLISHER: Activision AVAILABLE: Summer



Oh, this is rich! In Wu Tang, players get to play as any of nine clan members including RZA, Method Man, and 'Ol Dirty Bastard! Whew! Hot damn! I've been waiting for a rap-inspired fighting game. Hey, maybe they'll package this game with Pepsiman, and include a coupon for the upcoming Taco Bell Chihuahua adventure! The humanity. Corporate America has found gaming and the numbing prospects of the mainstream are creeping in. Oooh, gives you the chills, doesn't it? Oh, what the heck, maybe the game will actually play well.

Alright, here's the press info du jour. Each of these, uh, Wu Tang dudes has his own unique brand of Kung-Fu fighting moves. You (the player) must master these skills, both offensive and defensive, to block and counter, so as to not lose and thusly be greeted by the phrase game over. Diverse locations from Staten Island and New York and all the way to mythical China will provide the backdrop for the progressive story mode that pits players against an evil rival force (East coast vs. West coast!) challenging them (you) to acquire the skills to master the coveted "36 Chambers." Honestly, all sarcasm aside I know this engine, and this game will very likely be very, very good. How could I resist? >#<





EARTHWORM JIM 3D

DEVELOPER/PUBLISHER: Rockstar AVAILABLE: August

Rockstar to the rescue! As one of the world's biggest Earthworm Jim fans, I am happy to report that the spineless one is doing just fine in all of his wormy 3D goodness. Take 2's Rockstar division has taken over for Interplay as liaison and publisher for VIS' 3D worm caper, and according to the Rockstar's Tricia Grey, the worm never looked better. The game now destined to be released in August, the team behind EWJ 3D (Scottish lads they are) have had plenty of time to ensure that all three incarnations of Jim hit pay dirt. You know the story... After a cow falls on Jim's head he becomes trapped in his own twisted mind, and in order to escape, must outwit his own insane brain... Slay those demons Jim! (Remember that worms are hermaphrodites, and can reproduce themselves, so things could get very strange, very fast). Here's what Rockstar have to say about the game: "As you can probably tell, Earthworm Jim 3D is not your typical bouncy, bouncy save a princess/the world/your sister kind of game, where everything is merry and bright, it's flowers and candy all round before wandering off into the sunset. No! Not this game. Earthworm Jim 3D is more of a *Twin Peaks* kind of affair. There are some seriously nasty things going on which are your fault (hey, it's your mind). If you fail then you'll spend the rest of your miserable life as a bitter, mindless wreck of a worm, living on the streets begging for change and raking through dumpsters for stale pizza crusts." Bitchin! I love pizza crust! ⚡



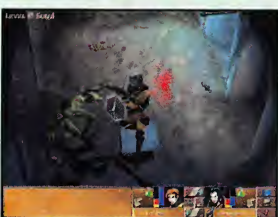
DARKSTONE

DEVELOPER: DELPHINE PUBLISHER: TAKE 2 AVAILABLE: SPRING



From the people who brought you Moto Racer and Fade to Black, Delphine Software, comes Darkstone, a strategy/action RPG for the PC and PlayStation with a brutally cool medieval guise and stunningly detailed characters and environments. You'll enter a tortured medieval world where you'll be charged with bringing down the merciless Drakk and his hellish domination of Earth. The rat bastard! With two characters at your command in this unique RPG, and a character creation mode, you must bring together seven magic crystals to empower the mystical Orb and conquer Drakk. For replayability's sake, a Quest Generator creates a unique quest at the beginning of every new game, which features over 30 levels per quest! Full camera control has been implemented, a training mode, along with hordes of weapons to bludgeon the game's vast assortment of hellish minions with (over 80 in all).

It's all network and internet savvy for your online pleasure and is designed to exploit 3D accelerator cards (compatible with D3D boards). PC version only, of course. ⚡



MONSTER TRUCK 64

DEVELOPER: EDGE OF REALITY PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR AVAILABLE: WINTER



Having thoroughly enjoyed the game on PC, even though I detest PC controls, I'm pretty excited about Rockstar's newly devised N64 version. Here's the skinny on MTM for the 64... MTM 64 is not just another "racing game," confined to a race track, looping round and round... A maximum action game for up to four players that captures the thrills of racing the largest, most ferocious vehicles in the world, Monster Truck Madness 64 takes racing games off-road and cross-country. The game has been created especially for the Nintendo 64 and takes full advantage of the 64's analog controller and graphics hardware. The physics engine has been written specifically for the game, giving it handling characteristics that are both realistic and immensely playable. The huge arenas have been created to encourage exploration as well as provide pure racing thrills. Loads of power-ups and hidden areas can be found in each arena, and anything you run into on the landscape can be bent, broken, damaged or just run down. Sounds good, eh? More soon... ⚡



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an interview with **Norimasa Hirano** chief, international department, snk



Mr. Norimasa Hirano makes plans for E3 as SNK prepare for the American launch of the Neo Geo Pocket Color.

Penetrating the GameBoy-dominated hand-held market is a daunting task, but with their Neo Geo Pocket Color, SNK are poised for the challenge. Mr. Norimasa Hirano, Chief, International Department, discusses SNK's newest hardware as well as their future projects.

GR: When did you start development of the Neo Geo Pocket (NGP)?

NORIMASA HIRANO: We started planning in summer of 1997, but actual development started at the beginning of 1998.

Why did you decide to create the NGP?

Up to now, the Neo Geo has been mainly for what you could call the core users. From now on we want to widen the appeal of Neo Geo to a wider range of users.

What will happen to the monochrome NGP now that you have released the color NGP?

For North America and Europe we will only be concentrating on the color version, but for other countries, such as China and India, we will mainly market the cheaper monochrome NGP.

Did you plan for the color NGP to be sold so quickly after the release of the monochrome version?

After the release of the Game Boy Color in November, the monochrome hand-held game market quickly shrunk in size, so we had to release the color NGP much earlier than we had originally intended to. Of course, once information about the color version was known, sales of the monochrome version dropped even lower as most people who wanted a NGP saved their money and waited for the color version. In addition, the monochrome Wonder Swan from Bandai has now been released, so we want to get ahead in the color market before them.

Do you consider the Game Boy as a serious rival?

Certainly it has a large market share, but the Neo Geo Pocket's target user is slightly different to the Game Boy user. First of all, we released the Neo Geo as a cartridge system. It was expensive, but the core user who liked fighting games bought it. However, because it was so costly, we made the Neo Geo CD, which enabled more users to buy it. By then porting our Neo Geo games to the PlayStation and Saturn we were further able to appeal to the general gamer. Our strategy is first to get the core user, then we move out to the general gamer. At some point in the future we will compete against the Game Boy, but at the moment it doesn't have any influence on the Neo Geo Pocket.

At your NGP private show you announced a lineup of around 100 titles for this year. Do you think this is really possible?

Certainly. In fact, we could easily produce over 100 titles this year if we really wanted to. However, that would be over 10 titles a month, and most people couldn't afford to buy anywhere near that many even if they were available.

Your announcement of SNK vs. Capcom for the NGP at the Tokyo Game Show took everyone by surprise didn't it?

We only finally agreed with Capcom to go ahead with this game just a few

days before the TGS. Since both SNK and Capcom have many very popular fighting games, the possibility of creating a dream match between our characters is not only exciting for the players, but an interesting project for the creators as well.

Your press announcement didn't reveal many details about the game. Is there anything you can tell us about it?

At the moment there are no plans for an arcade version, just a Neo Geo Pocket version, so all the development will be done by SNK. At this stage we haven't decided which characters will appear in the game, but as far as SNK is concerned, any character from any of our games has a possibility of appearing. Provisionally, there will be two SNK vs. Capcom games. The first one will be a card battle, because at the moment, this is a very popular genre in Japan. Then after that there will be a proper fighting game.

How many of the other SNK NGP titles are actually being developed by SNK?

Around 80 percent of these games are being programmed by us. The others are being programmed for us by third-party companies.

In order to create so many NGP games, have you increased your development staff?

We have taken on new staff to create NGP games, but we have also transferred some people from the arcade R&D to work on some of the NGP titles as well.

Is that the reason why you've reduced the number of arcade releases recently?

To a certain extent that's true, but that's not the only reason. Although both the arcade and NGP markets are important to us, at the moment the arcade sector is suffering a bit of a market decline because many users are now playing on home consoles instead. As a result, the operators can't afford to purchase so many new games, even if they wanted to. So for us it makes sense to concentrate on the consumer market for the present. To tell you the truth, we have arcade software titles waiting, but the operators aren't buying two or three titles at a time like they used to; now they only want one title at a time. This situation isn't just for SNK, it's for all arcade game manufacturers. However, our key titles will still be released on time. KOF has now become a special event for us as both the operators and the players know that it's coming each summer. They're all looking forward to it. We're developing that right now, as well as Metal Slug 3.

Although we all had high hopes for the Hyper Neo Geo 64 (HNG64), we haven't seen many titles released on it. Why is this?

One of the main reasons for this is cost. Of course, there are higher development costs for us, but the operators also incur extra costs as well. Compared to our 16-bit hardware, it is more expensive. And although HNG64 games may be more profitable for us, if the operators can't make enough money from them, then in the end we suffer as well.

Now that you've announced that you're developing for Sega's Naomi board, will you still continue to produce new HNG64 games?

That's one of the areas that we're a little uneasy about, as this is what some of the operators are worrying about. However, having gone to the trouble of creating our own 64-bit hardware we're not going to just give up developing for it. Even now we're working on a brand new original fighting game called Buriki ONE for the HNG64, which will probably come out as a spring title. We still have hundreds of thousands of 16-bit Neo Geo boards around the world that we've been supporting for over 10 years now, and we'll do the same for the HNG64 as well.

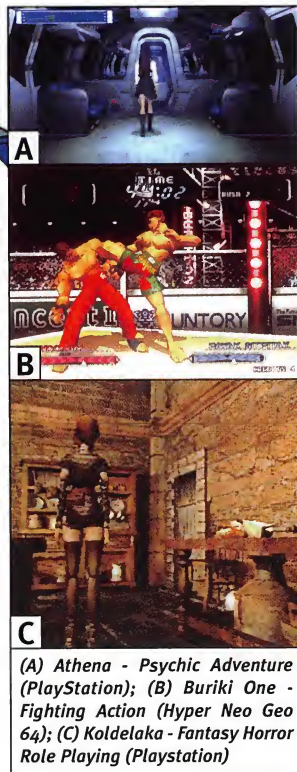
When SNK first announced the Hyper Neo Geo 64 it was thought by everyone that eventually you'd release a home console version as well. Is this still a possibility?

Currently we have no future plans to create a new home console.

Without your own HNG64 home console, you've decided to port your HNG64 titles to the Playstation instead. Do you have any specific plans for your porting strategy?

We chose to port Fatal Fury Wild Ambition first, because SNK's 16-bit fighting game history began with the Fatal Fury series. However, we do have plans to eventually port all our HNG64 titles that we've done up to now. As for future HNG64 titles, I can't really say anything. Maybe we will, maybe we won't.

Other than just porting your hardware titles, are you still developing original titles as well?



(A) Athena - Psychic Adventure (PlayStation); (B) Buriki One - Fighting Action (Hyper Neo Geo 64); (C) Koldelaka - Fantasy Horror Role Playing (Playstation)

Yes, we've just released Athena and are planning more new original titles.

What ever happened to the team who produced Samurai Spirits RPG?

For that project we tried for the first time to create an RPG. It was also our first attempt at an original home title. In this respect our objective was more than simply sales. The know-how that we gained from this project is now being applied by those who participated in Samurai Spirits in various new projects.

Are you planning to produce another RPG?

There is an image that SNK equals fighting and that fighting equals SNK. However, we aren't specifically a fighting-game company. We've already made a driving game and we're trying various new things. We do actually have a new RPG in development at the moment called Kodelaka. That's being developed for us by Sacnoth.

We know that Sacnoth left Square, but why did they decide to team up with SNK?

Sacnoth was looking for a sponsor, and we decided to support them. We're different from Square because we don't say anything about the way they create their games. All we do is support them financially; we aren't helping with development. In this way they can create better titles as an independent software company.

Can you tell us how SNK will develop from here on?

At this point there are 3 directions for SNK. One is for the arcade. Up to now we've been using 16-bit hardware and software, but the year before last we moved up to 64 bit. We're still in the process of experimenting with the technology, but at least we've had a go at it. For SNK it was our first time to build a dedicated cabinet for Road's Edge, which was our first driving game. We're still at an early stage of attempting this type of game, but we're aiming to become more like Sega, Namco and Konami by creating more dedicated cabinet games. We want to increase our market share both at home and abroad. The next direction for us is the Family Entertainment Centre. In Japan we have several Neo Geo World amusement places where

people can play not just video games, but also billiards and bowling. We want to build up this business as well. The third and final direction is consumer, and this is the most difficult area for us. With the Neo Geo Pocket we want to expand out from the core user and widen our market to the general gamer.



This SNK building even has an arcade on the first floor.



(C) SNK 1999 (C) YUMEKOBO 1999; (C) 1999 SACNOTH/SNK



neo geo pocket color

HANDHELD GAME SYSTEM

SNK

king of fighters r-2

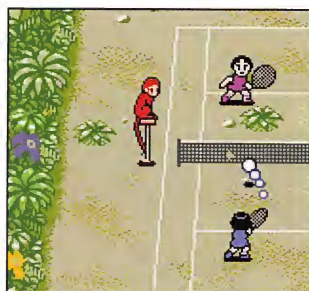
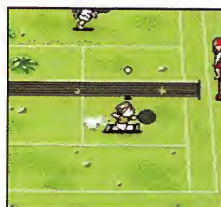
developer/publisher: snk available: now

Although King of Fighters R2 uses deformed characters to squeeze into the small screen of the Neo Geo Pocket Color, it impressively mimics the character movements and likenesses of its arcade/console counterpart. Incorporating the key elements of King of Fighters '98, this essentially miniature version includes the advantage system and character roulette, as well as the all-new Making, a technique in which hidden moves are discovered to enhance a characters' power; not only can a wider range of attacks be executed, but offense becomes more intuitive as well. Once you've imbued your favorite character with a load of moves, a training mode can be played to take these skills and beef them up even more. And it gets even better: fight data can be transported to the upcoming KOF on Dreamcast.



pocket tennis color

developer/publisher: snk available: now



In all its incredible simplicity, Pocket Tennis still has that casual, addictive playability of an 8-bit title – take a trip back to Tennis on NES to find this game's replica. Getting to grips with the gameplay is easier than declaring war on a tiny country: one button sends a lob, one button sends a smash, and the direction of the shot is all a

matter of basic proximity. When you're ready to take your rudimentary skills to one of the five courts, choose from a selection of eight characters – power, speed and defense vary – for competition in tournament play or exhibition, and when you've mastered the metronome gameplay, a listing of tournament results can be saved and displayed in the record mode. While there is little in the way of animation – diving for balls is as flashy as it gets – Pocket Tennis successfully uses its bare-bones formula for this-is-a-portable-system-so-let's-not-expect-more effect.

ポケットテニスカラー
POCKET
TENNIS
COLOR



samurai spirits 2

developer/publisher: snk available: tba

Games like Samurai Spirits 2 are why the future of this pint-sized Neo Geo looks so promising. While the Neo Geo Color Pocket has its limitations, it seems that every move and animation has been preserved from the original Samurai Spirits – you couldn't ask for a better translation. Joining the honorable Samururai cast are new combatants Asura, Shinzan, Hakkau and Shalrot, and through constant battle, the fighters can learn new moves and special attacks while strengthening each move to ultimate form. By completing every game mode, characters receive an official graphic card, which can be saved and displayed at a later time.





metal slug 1st mission

developer/publisher: snk available: tba

One of the Neo Geo's definitive MVS classics makes its way to the small screen much to the delight of fans everywhere. While there's no way Metal Slug: 1st Mission can fully capture the extreme animated splendor of the Neo Geo's massive carts or CDs, it promises to provide the same manic pace and humorous side-scrolling shooter action. The fact that SNK are bringing yet another huge franchise to their smaller, incredibly cool cousin should be reason enough to celebrate. This kind of support is a beautiful thing. Metal Slug: 1st Mission comes complete with all the massive weaponry of previous MS games, like the flamethrower, grenade launcher, and homers. And yes, you jump into tanks to blow 'em away, too! Now, pray for parallax!



(:r)

dive alert

developer/publisher: snk available: tba

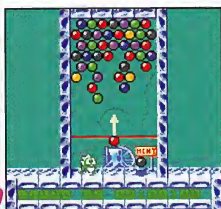
Dive Alert is looking interesting, mostly because it makes good use of the Neo Geo Pocket's wireless communication device – you can compete against friends without the bother of dangling cables. In the vs. mode, you can capture opponent's subs and add them to your collection. In the standard one-player game, you get to engage in a little RPG of sorts as you take on the role of a submarine captain and battle enemy fleets, earning experience points and sub upgrades.



puzzle bobble mini

developer/publisher: snk available: now

A hand-held system without a puzzle game would be as peculiar as Hollywood without pretention. With the wildly addictive Puzzle Bobble bursting its way into SNK's initial crop of titles, the Neo Geo Pocket Color will have a classic puzzler guaranteed to get the system off to a stellar beginning. This basic version of the repeatedly updated series takes the simple link-and-explode-the-colored-orbs gameplay and preserveringly translates it to the handheld medium. A must-have.



baseball stars color

developer/publisher: snk available: now

The energetic, monstrously entertaining arcade-style Baseball Stars may have been squeezed into a smaller package, but this interpretation of the Neo Geo giant retains all its fun and trademark style. Don't expect all the complexity we've come to expect in today's baseball games, but do expect a surprisingly sound arcade-inspired take on the sport: create your own team, track stats, and enjoy the celebratory animation cuts and wide list of player animations.

Like in most of the Neo Geo Pocket Color games, the ability to link with a friend adds new life to Baseball Stars Color. Another solid hit for this great new system.



Finally, the straight dope on SMB for GBC, as well as two more great games you need ASAP. And seeing as how they should be on the store shelves by now, what are you waiting for? Get going! As soon as you finish reading this issue, that is...

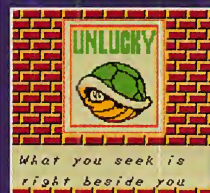
SUPER MARIO BROS. DELUXE

Nintendo
May 10, '99

Nintendo dropped by with an advance ROM of Super Mario Bros. Deluxe right after we closed issue 12. After I had stated that it would be a straight port in that issue, they launched into all the additions and bonuses they've packed into this tiny cartridge, so hold on as I wipe the egg off my face... Of course, the original game is here in all of its 8-bit glory, ready for your fingers to start mashing buttons, but they've also added a time challenge mode, in which you can take on each section of the game, blazing through each area against the clock. Many lives were lost at the GR offices on this model! They've also taken advantage of the Game Boy's link-up mode with a Head to Head Challenge, so if you've got a Game Link, a friend with a Game Boy and two copies of the game, you can go head-to-head in a Mario vs. Luigi race through eight special stages. And if that's not crazy enough, the "?" blocks act as switches on special walls and floors, so if Luigi hits a magic wall, he punches the block and can continue, as the wall blocks Mario, and vice versa. It's insane fun, believe me!

Nintendo have even added a fortune teller game, in the vein of a Magic 8 Ball, and a calendar is accessible as well. So remember last month when I told you to get this game just because of its portability (and awesome gameplay)? Well, Nintendo have outdone themselves again, and I'm heartily endorsing this game for everyone's portable game library!

A-



GAME BOY COLOR OUTPOST

R-TYPE DX

Nintendo
June '99

An arcade machine in your pocket? Nintendo delivers this and more! Both R-Type and R-Type II are included on this cartridge, and Nintendo sweetened the deal by combining both games into a single brain-melting side-scrolling shooting festival in R-Type DX. You'll be faced with the expected hordes of baddies and tough bosses to beat at the end of each level, with plenty of power-ups to help you complete the task. Unlimited continues will certainly help the aim-deficient gamer get further into the games than the arcade versions, but other than that (and the obvious difference in the screen size and technology) this contains the same shooters we've pumped quarters into for years, only pocket-sized and portable.



TOP GEAR POCKET

Finally! A game that takes advantage of the Game Boy Color's new stuff! Vatican Entertainment's Top Gear Pocket reminds me of those classic Genesis and TurboGrafx games of old like Super Hang-On and Final Lap Twin. You remember the breed: horizontal lines depicting speed, curvy roads, and scaling sprites! TGP brings it all back in winning style with excellent control, nicely laid-out hilly tracks, cool sound effects, and Rumble Pak vibrating action that causes the GB to tremble as you brush the borders, slide sideways or rub a little paint. The graphics are a testament to the GBC's added power and the cool SD cars look and handle great. The gameplay in TGP relies on applying the right amount of gas, brake and pitch to successfully maintain optimum speed. Eight cars start ahead of you, so to take the lead in the allotted three laps you'll have to jet skillfully to the finish without spinning out or trading too much paint. Initially there are three cars and three tracks to choose from, although like all TG games, secret cars and tracks lie in waiting once you beat the game. TGP is also two-player linkable! Hey, this game's Vatican!



GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEWS

page 67

reviews intro

They are few, but much quality is in effect among this month's quiver of review software. Three fighters well worth owning make the grade, as well as the benchmark, life-altering RPG, Everquest. (Curse you! I've lost an entire editor in there!) It's also nice to see Konami standing by Goemon and the gang.



GAMES REVIEWED THIS ISSUE

ALEX LALAS SOCCER	C-		
BLOODY ROAR 2	B	B	B
EHREIZ	B+	B	B
EVERQUEST	A	A	A-
GOEMON'S ADVENTURE	B	B+	B+
MONACO GP	B-	C+	
MLB 2000	B+		
REQUIEM	B+		
SHADOWGATE 64	B	B-	B
SMASH BROS.	B+	A-	B+

IMPORT REVIEWS

Combat Choro Q	C+
Dr. Slum	C+
Pepsi Man	B-

GAMERS' REPUBLIC REVIEW SYSTEM

- (A+)
- (A)
- (A-)
- (B+)
- (B)
- (B-)
- (C+)
- (C)
- (C-)
- (D+)
- (D)
- (D-)
- (F)

(A+ to A) Games in this bracket are the best of the best. They feature the highest quality visual presentation, and are excellent in both initial and long term playability. The very best video game of its type, worthy of every gamer's undivided attention. *Example: Zelda*

(A- to B) Excellent, solid, and highly playable pieces of software, although they lack minor polish to become truly outstanding. Slight frame rate problems, a marginally disappointing ending or any number of small quirks may take an otherwise exalted release down a notch. *Example: Ehrgeiz*

(B- to C) Games in this bracket are generally very good, but may have one or more flaws. A game receiving a B- may be a great game that's just too short or has irritating music, while a C may have these same problems plus a couple more. Very good to average entertainment. *Example: Pepsi Man*

(C- to D) Games in this bracket require serious help in two or more areas. Perhaps the control responds horribly and the characters animate poorly. Although a game of this caliber may have had a great initial concept, it was never fully realized in the final stages of design. *Example: Sengoku Turb*

(D- to F) Very rarely will you come across a game of this lack of quality. A complete dearth of vision, a determination to remove any semblance of gameplay or fun, and particular attention made to use none of the most rudimentary of the system's proprietary tools. *Example: Wardner's Forest*

1. Games marked in **RED** are highly recommended for your gaming collection.

2. Games marked in **YELLOW** should be avoided completely.

[Subject to the reviewer's personal preferences, it can be generally accepted that any game scoring a B or higher is a great way to spend your day. Games scoring a low D or F should be microwaved for three seconds and returned.]





bloodyROAR2



BLOODY ROAR 2

BY MIKE GRIFFIN

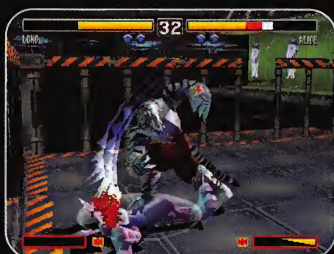
*Human and beast clash again in Hudson's animal of a sequel
Beat down all manner of freak and live to tell!*



It's clear that the way forward with 3D fighters is to emphasize freedom of 3D movement, opening the environment to players' creativity. Games like Tekken 3, Street Fighter EX 2, and the game before you, Bloody Roar 2, still follow the old precept of combo mania within a context of 2D gameplay. This style may be considered "old school" soon, so we should expect games like Bloody Roar 2 to be a fine example. I'm happy to say BR2 does this well-established style of gameplay proud.

In the first BR game, the half-beast zoanthropes ended the evil genetic experimentation of the Tyron Corporation. Their sinister procedures were publicly exposed, and key members of the company were arrested. The victims and their families would find some peace, away from the grip of corruption...but they would find no such peace or acceptance in the public eye.

When the "normal" public discover that there are half-beast mutants living among them, they begin to fear them. In their ignorance, they cannot begin to fathom the concept of a 14-year-old (a pure-hearted zoanthrope) being capable of more destruction than a military force. Thus prejudice surfaces, and with the aid of the



bloodyROAR2

BEAST RAGE



Here are some of Bloody Roar 2's more spectacular moments, captured during the Beast transformation and ensuing Rage moves. This is definitely one of BR2's strongest advantages over other fighters on the market. The Beast designs are unique, the moves are powerful, and the violence is extreme!

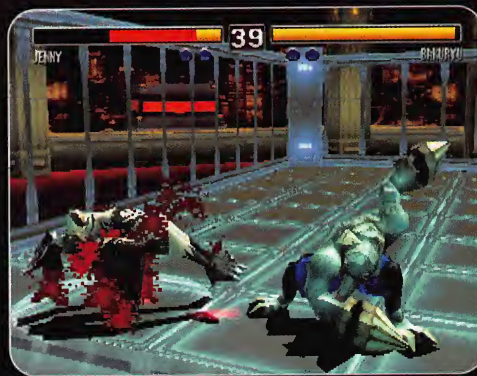


media, the mutants are labeled as a danger to humanity. The Government begins to execute or institutionalize the zoanthropes, ironically implicating certain beasts as martyrs in the Tyron Corporation conspiracy.

In addition to its hyper original storyline, Bloody Roar 2 has solid gameplay options. You can follow the cool plot through the Story mode, which offers lovely high res scenes, or enjoy the standard Arcade or Survival modes. There's a Watch mode, in which the CPU characters absolutely smash each other, or BR2's hyper-original Custom mode, which allows one to create mad combos, change the characters into freaky designs, or add funky graphic effects like afterimage.

BR2 plays very well. Fans of the original game will love the enhancements, like faster response, better collision, and an improved combo timing system. A special highlight: If you can beat down all the characters in Survival mode (no easy feat), you'll have access to a Cancel Point option in the Custom mode that lets you link almost any combo together, whether it seems feasible or not! The beatings can be tremendously original and satisfying.

Although not the most revolutionary fighter on the market, Bloody Roar 2 offers great graphics (backgrounds especially), decent tunes, spot-on controls, and excellent options. The intro is weak, but not terrible. I recommend this game to fans of Tekken, as it offers a similar range of moves, and the added bonus of beast transformation is a definite plus. I'll still go for free-roamers like Ehrgeiz and Destrega over Bloody Roar 2 any day, because they encourage constant creativity, but I recognize this game's solid, very playable status.



■ SMOOTH 60-FPS VISUALS; 6000 ENVELOPING
■ EXCELLENT THEME AND CHARACTER DESIGN

■ INTRICATE, VIOLENT COMBOS AND "RAGE" MOVES
■ SLIGHTLY DATED GAMEPLAY STYLE, BUT VERY SOLID

REPUBLIC SAYS...

SURE, BLOODY ROAR 2 MAY NOT BE THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY FIGHTER ON THE PS, BUT IT'S VICIOUSLY QUICK, VERY CONTROLLABLE, AND OFFERS COOL BEAST TRANSFORMATION.

B



EHRGEIZ

BY MIKE HOBBS

One of the great, unsung 3D fighters on PS was the criminally overlooked Tobal No.1. For whatever reason, this game flew right over the heads of most American gamers and ended up selling so poorly that its vastly improved sequel was never even released here. The company behind both these games, Dream Factory, were trying something very unique in a completely 3D fighter, and those wanting a more Tekken-like experience were unsure what to make of it. If only more people had been exposed to Tobal, it may have found the following that it so rightly deserved. With Ehrgeiz, Dream Factory will finally get the chance to expose their rather singular take on the fully 3D fighter to a much larger audience. The inclusion of FF VII characters Cloud, Tifa, Sephiroth, Vincent, and Yuffie (the last two being "hidden" characters) should be enough to pique any sentient gamer's curiosity.

Ehrgeiz's gameplay, though owing a great deal to Tobal, differs in a few fundamental ways. Fighting stages now have multiple levels to them, allowing you to throw projectile attacks from on high or do a nice belly flop onto an opponent. Like Tobal 2, characters have unblockable



Dream Factory reaches out to the masses FF characters meet Tobal-style gameplay!

specials that must be avoided, but you can bound off of walls and other objects within stages to attack. The gamplay in Ehrgeiz certainly takes a lot of getting used to, and more than likely, you won't like the way it plays in the first half an hour. Extended play, however, reveals great depth as you learn how to interrupt moves, counter throws, and unleash massive and devastating combos.

For a 60 frames PS fighter, Ehrgeiz looks good. In comparison to the System 22 arcade original, however, the colors appear a bit washed out and it suffers from flickering life bars when the action heats up. I miss the incredible looking gouraud shaded characters of Tobal 2 and wish Dream Factory had used this style again, but few should complain about what's been accomplished here.

In addition to story and versus modes, Ehrgeiz throws in four cool mini games and a Tobal-like quest mode with amazing looking 60 frames visuals. Plenty here to recommend. >#



■ FF CHARACTERS SURE TO DRAW PLAYERS
■ GOOD DREAM FACTORY MUSIC

■ INCREDIBLE CG INTRO AND ENDING SCENES
■ VISUALS A BIT WASHED OUT COMPARED WITH ARCADE

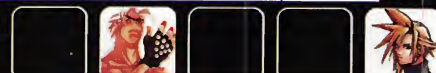
REPUBLIC SAYS...

WITH ITS FF CHARACTERS, GAMERS WILL FINALLY BE FORCED TO CHECK OUT DREAM FACTORY'S UNIQUE TAKE ON 3D FIGHTING.

B



squaresoft >>>



Echo Night

The adventure begins this summer...



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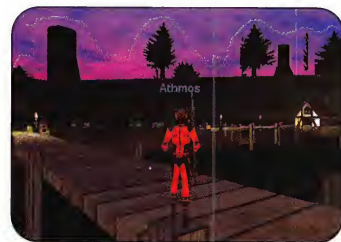
EVERQUEST



9 89 should be selling EverQuest with a "Satisfaction Guaranteed" label in tow. Normally I'd be adverse to applying such a bold statement to a game as genre-defying as EverQuest, but it's really *that* good. I have never before in my long gaming life been so committed, so blindly loyal and addicted, to an online game. EverQuest has firmly fused itself to my consciousness,

occupying dreams, complicating my social life, and demanding insane care and attention. This isn't a curse; EQ is a blessing cleverly hidden beneath obsession, of which there is no escape. It is the single most epic, satisfying, and controllable RPG experience I have ever been witness to. Funny I should say that: After all, each time I melt into the EverQuest world, it's clear that I've merely played the role of "witness" in all other traditional RPGs. A witness to linear events that lead me through protocol, progressing through planned scenarios despite any viable sense of control that may be evoked. Bound within limitations, even that of masterful storytelling and skilled direction, led nonetheless by planning and linear circumstances...never really in control of my destiny, never really playing a role of my choosing. Certainly never to the massively social extent of this brilliantly conceived online RPG.

EverQuest involves thousands of very real, absolutely unique characters ("role players," as it were) in a massive online fantasy world. Events are never, ever pre-determined, unless a vast network of clairvoyant mind readers were being employed by 989 Studios. Instead, players make their way through huge fully realized three-dimensional landscapes at their own pace, free to progress at whatever pace they should desire, in any direction they deem to be worthy of travel. Humans, Ogres, Elves, Gnomes, and Dwarves, in all manner of racial purity, tread the world of Corona together. You accept the role in any number of classes, from gentle healing Clerics to combat proficient Warriors, survivalist Rangers, or corpse-animating Shaman, and you explore alongside fellow travelers, raising levels and stature, nurturing valuable skills, and custom tailoring your appearance and personality to within a breath of true desire. It may be only a game, bound by keyboard control, limited to your PC's specifications, and easily terminated by a power switch, but EverQuest is one of the few games on the market capable of burying such aspects of reality in a completely cohesive, immeasurably satisfying social gameplay experience.






It's impossible to fully detail the incredible size and depth of EverQuest in so short a space. If you were to cross the game's main continent, it would take over eight hours. To sail from the eastern continent to the central continent, it takes over half an hour on board a huge ferry. You could play for two days (yes, 48 hours) to reach level eight. The 3D-accelerated-only graphics, considering the (practically) limitless size of the environments, are superb. You can see extremely far in all directions, in any number of views (third person, etc.), in full screen, semi-full screen, or menu overlay modes. It's very convincing and user-friendly. Gorgeous shifting clouds drift by as day turns to night, and during the darkest hours, magic and fire pierce the murk with beautiful lighting effects. Some towns, namely Freeport, are simply too massive to comprehend. And the adventuresome music and fully immersive sound effects are perfect. EverQuest paints a lovely audio-visual collage, inspiring exploration to the point where you lose yourself in it. The controls, too, are totally customizable and easily learned, and one can create handy sets of "hot buttons" to avoid too many clicks or pointless menu cycling.

In terms of EQ's social aspect, you may explore and fight alone, or be a part of groups comprised of up to six players, in which case you all share experience and items earned. You may communicate in real-time, any time, through intelligent text commands such as "tell" (for private messages), "say," or "shout," and real world opinions or questions may be offered using the "Out of Character" command. With up to 1500 or more

players per server interacting within the same world at one time, you are as dependant upon fellow gamer as you are upon the NPC-run shops and guilds that aid you in your quest. Fittingly, EQ has already spawned a massive post-game community online.

EverQuest may be a multiplayer only RPG, but it has universal appeal. You're always encouraged to progress, gaining, learning, adapting—open to any range of skill or genre preference. The environments and objectives are virtually unlimited, and 989 are updating quests, characters, menus, control parameters (and even music tracks!) through patches on a weekly basis. Best of all, players cannot kill each other unless *each* has chosen the path of "Player Killer," nor can you loot another player's fallen corpse unless permission is specifically given.

EverQuest is an online project for gamers everywhere to take on, together, for months and months on end. And although 989 can't rightfully say it, I can guarantee you complete satisfaction. Grab a copy now and fade away into Norrath... 

■ A GREAT REASON TO UPGRADE YOUR PC & 3D CARD
■ BEYOND HUGE...EQ WILL BE AROUND FOR YEARS

■ IMMENSELY SATISFYING RPG PROGRESSION
■ ALWAYS A NEW EVENT TO SHARE WITH THOUSANDS

REPUBLIC SAYS...

989 HAVE PLEDGED COMPLETE SUPPORT FOR EQ, EVEN HINTING AT EXPANSION PACKS FOR YEARS TO COME. THERE'S NEVER BEEN AN RPG SO VAST, AN UNDERTAKING SO LIMITLESS.





SUPER SMASH BROS.

BY BRADY FIECHTER

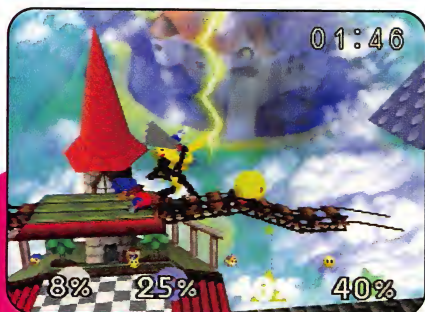
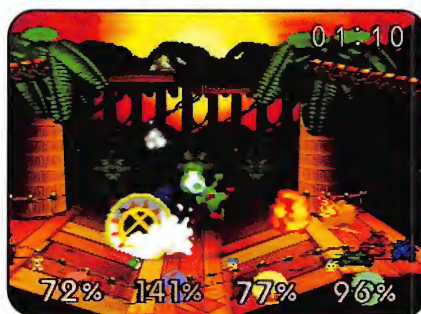
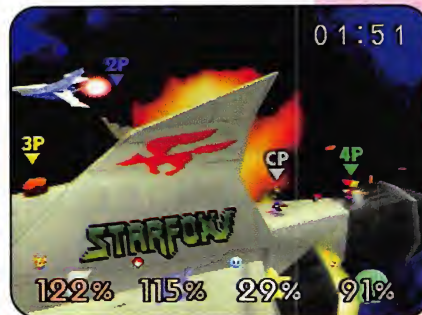
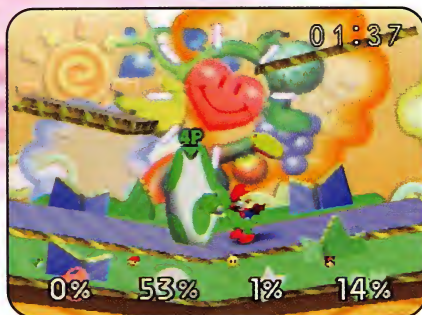
★ boom!

What a marvelous idea. That thought kept circulating as I played Super Smash Bros., the wildly entertaining fighting game that pits Nintendo's most indelible figures against each other in a manic battle for supremacy. From Mario and Link to Samus and Donkey Kong, the video game greats exchange punches, kicks, slashes, explosions and throws with one goal at hand: pound the opponents silly until they can no longer make his way back into the arena.

With a general repertoire of close- and long-range fighting techniques augmented by a small compliment of signature moves - Mario has his fireball, Yoshi an egg toss, Link a boomerang and hook shot, etc. - the characters settle their conflict in colorful stages that come alive with designs inspired by classic settings. Each of the 10 main arenas presents unique challenges and hazards, from the lava creeping up the towering platforms in Planet Zebes to the vacillating platform under Castle Peach. No matter where the fight may take place, the main concern is avoiding the edges of the arenas and, of course, ensuring that the opposition receives the brunt of the damage. Once enough blows have been dealt and the percentage gauge at the bottom of the screen is high enough, an opponent can be sent plummeting toward his doom with an attack as simple as a well-placed jump kick or quick throw.

A big part of the game's appeal centers around the wonderful cast of characters and typically endearing Nintendo style, punctuated by great animations and sound. There is a less is more approach to the graphics - no big effects or striking imagery here - but there's no escaping the immense allure of fighting in a Nintendo universe: a Zelda setting with classic tunes is priceless.

Frantically pounding out a few simple button combinations and collecting the occasional power-up to expedite the damage typifies the Smash Bros. experience. The game is simple but fun, carried along by the kinetic playability, but it does threaten to stall as a one-player experience. But jump into the four-player competition and Smash Bros. plays its strongest hand, offering hours of trash talking mayhem. On the N64, multiplayer gaming doesn't get much better than this. ✱



■ RICH NINTENDO VISUAL STYLE, GREAT ANIMATION AND MUSIC
■ A SUPERB, HIGHLY CHARGED FOUR-PLAYER BATTLE

■ 8 CLASSIC NINTENDO CHARACTERS PLUS 4 HIDDEN ONES
■ NOT YOUR TYPICAL FIGHTING GAME

REPUBLIC SAYS...

SUPER SMASH BROS. IS THE PERFECT SCENARIO FOR A MULTIPLAYER FIGHTER, ANOTHER NINTENDO GEM WITH UNIVERSAL APPEAL.

B+



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page 75

all-format reviews

shadowgate

DEVELOPER: INFINITE VENTURES PUBLISHER: KEMCO AVAILABLE: NOW



Kemco had a legendary title for quite some time over a decade ago with Shadowgate on the NES. The game offered players an easy icon driven, press-to-inspect-or-operate gameplay system combined with impressive, atmospheric stills and animation. The game could essentially be beaten in 10 minutes. In fact, I remember my strange friend had it down to eight minutes flat, but he knew what to press and when to press it better than he knew his own mother for a while. Regardless, Shadowgate was still regarded as a benchmark title with a memorable storyline and many unforgettable 8-bit settings.

Now Kemco have returned with a deeply atmospheric and intriguing sequel on the N64, and thanks to developers Infinite Ventures, they've managed to maintain the fine reputation of the Shadowgate name. In Shadowgate 64, an evil force deep within Castle Shadowgate again threatens the land of Kal Torlin. You play the role of Del Cottonwood, a happy-go-lucky halfling traveler who is seized by a group of thieves when his caravan is ambushed. He is dragged to the Chamber of Holding in Castle Shadowgate's lower reaches and is left to rot before an execution date would be decided. You must escape or die like the others!

Initially what really impressed me about S64 was the control schematic: it's just like Turok's, where the "C" buttons control movement, and the stick handles looking around/turning. This makes exploring easy and enjoyable. The exploration itself is very well conceived, offering loads of environment to interact with as you solve dozens of cunning puzzles. The 3D is pretty weak in terms of resolution and complexity, but it's actually quite sufficient in that it evokes fear and successfully provides atmosphere. The storyline is really very enjoyable too; it's a fairly well written, dark, gothic medieval tale that easily draws you in for the duration. Fans of gothic fantasy will be pleased.

Shadowgate 64 is a recommended title. It's a great sequel to be sure, loaded with mystery and puzzles, now in full 3D, and you'll find no other game like it on the system.



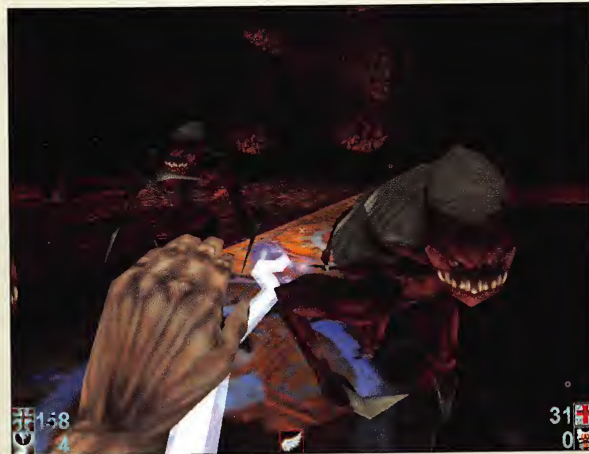
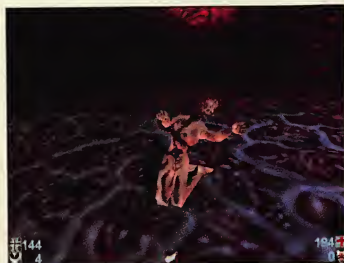
REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL

DEVELOPER: CYCLONE STUDIOS PUBLISHER: 3DO AVAILABLE: NOW



The area of gameplay improvements in the first-person shooter market has gathered cobwebs for long enough. Kingpin and Requiem are making the single-player version of these types of brutal blood-fests FUN (as in Freakin' Unbelievable and Nasty). Requiem: Avenging Angel is a surprisingly first-rate FPS from Cyclone Studios and 3DO that has tight multiplayer gameplay, imaginative combat (turning your enemies into a pillar of salt was new the last time I checked), quick-loading levels that are beautiful and intricate, and an awesome proprietary engine with full support for colored lighting, shadows (albeit broken ones) and high-res textures. High praise goes to Requiem's models and the animation that makes them flow, grimace, and gib so nicely.

You are Malachi, the Lord's revenging redeemer, coming down to boil blood and take names on the fallen angles running amok on good ol' terra firma. To accomplish this, you are blessed with numerous angelic powers during your quest's progression. The weapons and armor you collect are standard, but the angelic arsenal that burgeons within Malachi is what makes this game top notch: Blood Boil fries living plasma, creating an amazing deformation effect; Possession allows you to fly ethereally into an enemy host and pull his strings as your new puppet of death reigns molten lead into his comrades, only to take his life as you burst forth from his violated body once you're finished with it. There are also defensive powers such as deflect (I shot you...No, I shot me!), and Shockwave, which causes a 5.0 on the Richter scale, stunning all in your midst. The end-all is Apocalypse, which nukes all heathens within range of its roaring white burst. This game will captivate your soul and make your computer your altar.



COUNTER + POINT

**Bloody Roar 2** • Hudson • Sony

As Reviewed By: Mike Griffin (page 68, 69)

I'LL STILL GO FOR FREE-ROAMERS LIKE EHRGEIZ AND DESTREGA OVER BLOODY ROAR 2 ANY DAY.



- 60-FPS VISUALS AND HIGH ACTION QUOTIENT MAKE BLOODY ROAR 2 WORTH CHECKING OUT
- CHECK ASPIRATIONS FOR ANYTHING REVOLUTIONARY AT THE DOOR

Mike Hobbs:

B

THERE'S A GREAT GIMMICK AT THE HEART OF BLOODY ROAR 2. EXPLODING INTO A BEAST HASN'T LOST MUCH OF ITS APPEAL OVER THE FIRST GAME, NOR HAVE THE 60-FPS GRAPHICS LOST THEIR IMPACT. BUT THE FIGHTING GENRE HAS MATURED OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS, AND BLOODY ROAR 2 STILL PLAYS LIKE THE ORIGINAL. THERE'S VERY LITTLE 3D MOVEMENT IN BR2, THIS COMING AT A TIME WHEN FREE-ROAMING FIGHTERS (POWER STONE, TOBAL 2) HAVE ALREADY PROVEN THEIR WORTH IN THIS EVOLVING GENRE. STILL, BLOODY ROAR 2 IS CERTAINLY WORTH A FEW CHEAP THRILLS AND THERE'S NO DENYING THAT IT PRESENTS PLAYERS WITH A HEALTHY DOSE OF FAST, EMPTY FUN.



- INSPIRED CHARACTER DESIGN BRINGS THE GAME TO LIFE!
- THE FRANTIC PACE IS PUSHED BY THE CONSTANT THREAT OF METAMORPHOSIS!

Dave Halverson:

B

BLOODY ROAR 2 IS A BEAUTIFUL GAME. WITH SOME OF THE MOST INSPIRED CHARACTER DESIGNS YOU'LL FIND ANYWHERE IN THE ANNALS OF 32-BIT FIGHTING, YOU JUST DON'T SEE CHARACTERS LIKE STUN, URICO, AND JENNY, EVERYDAY. BOTH THEIR HAND-DRAWN AND POLYGONAL GUISES ARE MASTERFUL. THE ACTION, MADE ALL THE MORE FRANTIC BY THE SUDDEN BURSTS OF METAMORPHOSIS, MOVES AT A BRISK 60 FPS AMONG AN IMPRESSIVE ARRAY OF ENVIRONMENTS, AND THE MUSIC IS FIRST RATE. IF THERE IS A FLY IN THE OINTMENT, IT'S THAT THE GAME IS SOMEWHAT EASY TO DEFEAT, AS THE BALANCE IS SOMEWHAT SWAYED IN FAVOR OF THE QUICKER BEASTS. OVERALL, THOUGH, BR2 IS THE YEAR'S BEST FIGHTERS. I'M COLD ON THE POLY FIGHT FORMULA, SO A B IS SKY HIGH.

**Ehrgeiz** • Dream Factory • Square

As Reviewed By: Mike Hobbs (page 70)

WITH ITS FF CHARACTERS, GAMERS WILL FINALLY BE FORCED TO CHECK OUT DREAM FACTORY'S UNIQUE TAKE ON 3D FIGHTING.



- UNIQUE GAMEPLAY COMBINES WITH PLEASING 60-FPS ANIMATION AND GREAT MUSIC
- THE GAME HINTS AT RICH DESIGN IDEAS BUT SEEMS UNDERMINED BY THE PS HARDWARE

Grady Fiechter:

B

THE MASTERS AT SQUARE HAVE CRAFTED SOME OF VIDEO GAME'S CHOICEST BODIES OF WORK, BUT AS FAR AS AMERICAN GAMERS ARE CONCERNED, THE SUPERB TOBAL FIGHTING SERIES DOES NOT BELONG ON THE LIST. SQUARE ARE NOW MAKING A SECOND ATTEMPT AT PENETRATING THE FIGHTING-GAME MARKET WITH EHRGEIZ, AN EXCELLENT BRAWLER THAT BORROWS FROM THE TOBAL SCHOOL OF COMBAT. LIKE IN TOBAL, THE FIGHTING STYLE IS NOT QUICKLY DIGESTIBLE, BUT ONCE YOU ACCLIMATE YOURSELF WITH THE TIERED ARENAS AND INTRICACIES OF THE FREE-FORM FIGHTING, THE GAME BEGINS TO BLOOM WITH PLEASINGLY DEEP AND STRATEGIC GAMEPLAY. BIGGEST FLAW: INSPIRED DESIGN IS STUNTED BY PLAYSTATION HARDWARE.



- STUNNING INTRO AND FINE TUNES ROUND OUT THE PACKAGE
- MISSING ARCADE'S BEAUTIFUL POLYGONAL SHAPES AND RICH COLORS, BUT COMPENSATES WITH COOL BONUS GAMES

Mike Griffin:

B+

O.K., FOR THE RECORD, HERE'S MY TOP 3 LIST OF FIGHTERS SO FAR IN '99: 3) DESTREGA, 2) EHRGEIZ, AND 1) POWER STONE, WITHOUT A DOUBT. AS YOU CAN TELL, I'VE JUMPED ONTO THE "FREE-ROAMING" 3D BANDWAGON AND IT'S SERVING ME VERY WELL. I HAVEN'T HAD THIS MUCH FUN WITH FIGHTERS IN A LONG TIME, AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE I CAN FINALLY MOVE IN ALL DIRECTIONS WHILE ENJOYING ONE-ON-ONE STRATEGY. EHRGEIZ MAKES NO. 2 FOR ME BECAUSE IT HAS AN EXCELLENT RHYTHM AND BALANCE, AND SURPRISING DEPTH. HONESTLY, ONCE YOU LEARN TO DODGE, COUNTER, AND EVADE IN FLOWING 3D MOVEMENTS (NOT JUST IN BURSTS), YOU'LL BE QUITE AMAZED BY DREAM FACTORY'S POST-TOBAL 2 EFFORT.

**Everquest** • Verant • 989 Studios

As Reviewed By: Mike Griffin (page 72, 73)

989 HAVE PLEDGED COMPLETE SUPPORT FOR EQ, EVEN HINTING AT EXPANSION PACKS FOR YEARS TO COME. THERE'S NEVER BEEN AN RPG SO VAST, AN UNDERTAKING SO LIMITLESS.



- LEVEL UP SYSTEM IS FAIR AND COMPLETELY INVOLVING. IT TAKES A WHILE TO GAIN LEVELS, BUT THERE'S SKILL.
- I APPRECIATE THE STRATEGY FOR EACH CHARACTER CLASS AND RACE. GREAT DEPTH ALL AROUND!

Eric Pratte:

A-

18 HOURS. 18 HOURS STRAIGHT I WAS GLUED TO MY MONITOR AS I SLAYED RATS, BATS, AND RAN FROM EVERYTHING ELSE. THE OLD SLEEPLESS NIGHTS OF D&D ESCAPADES IN A FRIEND'S BACKYARD HAVE COME BACK TO HAUNT ME WITH EVERQUEST. ONE MORE PIECE OF ARMOR, ONE MORE LEVEL, ONE MORE MONSTER, ONE MORE MAD DASH TO A GUARD TOWER AS A COUPLE OF SLIGHTLY TICKED GRIZZLIES NIBBLE ON MY BOOTS. GREAT GRAPHICS (TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE NUMBER OF MONSTERS AND PLAYERS THAT CAN BE IN THE SAME AREA AT ONCE) AND FABULOUS WORLDS WITH LOTS OF GNOLLS, ER, NOOKS AND CRANNIES TO EXPLORE. QUESTS AND COMRADERY, ADVENTURE AND AMAZEMENT, DEPTH AND DANGER, MONSTERS AND MAYHEM - REAL LIFE IS PLAIN IN COMPARISON.



- THE IMMENSE HUMAN ELEMENT GIVES THE GAME AN UNYIELDING LEVEL OF SPONTANEITY
- THE BREADTH OF EVER QUEST'S ATMOSPHERIC WORLD IS CONSUMING

Grady Fiechter

A

AMAZINGLY AMBITIOUS, FINELY CRAFTED, REMARKABLY VAST IN SCALE: EVERQUEST IS AN EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENT. AN INORDINATELY ENGROSSING GAME THAT TAKES ONLINE PLAY TO ANOTHER, UNSEEN LEVEL, EVERQUEST IS THE VERY DEFINITION OF ROLE PLAYING: YOU ASSUME THE ROLE OF YOUR CHARACTER, YOU LIVE IN THIS FANTASY WORLD, YOU PERFORM LOGICAL TASKS. LIKE ANY GREAT ACHIEVEMENT IN GAMING, EVERQUEST SHOWS YOU A PLACE THAT EXCITES THE IMAGINATION - A VISUALLY PLEASING LAND THAT'S UNPRECEDENTED IN ITS VASTNESS, UNCOMMONLY SPONTANEOUS AND STRIPPED OF BOUNDARIES. IN A GAME WHERE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE COMPRISE THE POPULACE, A NEW LEVEL OF INTERACTION IS BORN THAT A SCRIPTED COMPUTER INTELLIGENCE CAN NOT AFFORD.



Goemon's Great Adventure • Konami



AS THE GENERAL PUBLIC CLAMORS FOR 3D GAMEPLAY, THE DIMINISHING GAMERS LIKE MYSELF RECEIVE THE 2D SIDE SCROLLERS LIKE GOEMON'S GREAT ADVENTURE WITH APPRECIATION AND EXCITEMENT. A COMPLETE, IMMENSELY SATISFYING PLAY, THIS GAME HAS BEEN HANDLED COMPETENTLY BY THE KOBE TEAM IN EVERY REGARD.

B+

- 2D GAMEPLAY LIVES! KEEP THE FIRE BURNING PEOPLE! BUY THIS GAME AND BE COUNTED!
- FOUR CHARACTERS TO PLAY, PLATFORMING ACTION, 3D ACTION, AND HUGE TOWNS! WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE?

Dave Halverson:

B+

AFTER COMPLETING ONE OF '98'S MOST UNDERRATED GAMES, MYSTICAL NINJA 64, I THOUGHT THE POSSIBILITY SLIM THAT KONAMI WOULD BRAVE THE U.S. MARKET AGAIN WITH THEIR ZANIEST JAPANESE FRANCHISE. I'M BOTH IMPRESSED AND HAPPY THAT THEY HAVE. I'M ALSO THRILLED THAT IT'S 2D! GOEMON'S GREAT ADVENTURE MELTS INSPIRED 2D SIDESCROLLING POLYGONAL FARE, ACTION-PLATFORM STYLE, WITH ROLE PLAYING AND PUZZLE SOLVING TO A BRILLIANT END. THE TOWNS ARE TRULY INSPIRED WORKS OF POLYGONOMETRY, THE VISUALS THROUGHOUT THE ACTION SEQUENCES ARE METICULOUSLY DETAILED, AND THE IMPACT SCENES ARE A TESTAMENT TO THE KOBE TEAM'S PROWESS. I ALSO LIKE THE ADDITION OF TIME-SENSITIVE ACTION. BUY THIS GAME.



- FAST, EASY ACTION THAT'S A DEPARTURE FROM THE MORE ESOTERIC PREDECESSORS.
- IT'S GOOD TO SEE THIS KIND OF GAMEPLAY REPRESENTED ON THE N64, EVEN IF IT'S A BIT SIMPLE.

Mike Hobbs:

B

THE UNDER-APPRECIATED GOEMON SERIES GETS ITS BEST SHOT AT MAINSTREAM ACCEPTANCE WITH GOEMON'S GREAT ADVENTURE. WITH LITTLE OF THE EXPLORING THAT CHARACTERIZED THE FIRST N64 MARIO-INSPIRED GOEMON GAME, THIS LATEST IS A 2.5D ACTION PLATFORMER WITH TIGHT CONTROL AND SHORT, EASY-TO-DIGEST LEVELS. APART FROM THE FREE-ROAMING TIME SPENT IN TOWNS, THE BULK OF THE GAME IS STRAIGHTFORWARD 2D GAMEPLAY, AND YOU'LL HEAR NO COMPLAINTS FROM ME. THE FOUR CLASSIC GOEMON CHARACTERS ARE ALL SELECTABLE FOR A NICE DOSE OF VARIETY, AND IT'S FUN EXPLORING THEIR DIFFERENT ABILITIES. IT'S A BIT OF A SIMPLE GAME, BUT HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE - JUST WHAT THE SERIES NEEDED.



Shadow Gate 64 • Kemco • Infinite Ventures



AS REVIEWED BY: Mike Griffin (page 79)

SOMETIMES ONE CAN FORGIVE A LACK OF GRAPHICAL SHEEN, AUDIO DELIGHTS, AND CG MANIA SIMPLY TO ENJOY THE SWEEPING ATMOSPHERE THAT A GAME CAN PROVIDE. THIS IS ONE OF THOSE SITUATIONS. SHADOWGATE 64 IS ESTHETICALLY SLOPPY IN MANY WAYS, BUT IT'S A VERY INVOLVING FANTASY PUZZLE GAME.

B-

- WELL WRITTEN AND INTELLIGENT TEXT PULLS YOU INTO THE GAME, WHILE THE DARK ATMOSPHERE SETS A GREAT TONE
- GOOD CONTROL SCHEME AND ENJOYABLE PUZZLES ROUND OUT THIS FIRST-PERSON ADVENTURE

Mike Hobbs

B

THIS IS A GAME THAT, TO BE HONEST, I WAS PREPARED NOT TO LIKE. IN INITIAL GLANCES, SHADOWGATE 64 LOOKED MURKY AND DULL. BUT AFTER GIVING IT A GO, I FOUND MYSELF PLEASANTLY SURPRISED. WHAT IMMEDIATELY STRUCK ME WAS THE OVERALL QUALITY OF THE IN GAME TEXT. IT WAS ACTUALLY WELL WRITTEN, CREATING BELIEVABLE CHARACTERS AND SITUATIONS WITH WHICH TO INTERACT. THE NEXT SURPRISE CAME WHEN I EXPERIENCED THE INTUITIVE CONTROL SCHEME (TUROK STYLE), WHICH MADE NAVIGATING THE 3D WORLD QUITE MANAGEABLE. FINALLY, ITS ENJOYABLE PUZZLES AND ADEQUATELY ATMOSPHERIC LOOK HAD ME HOOKED. SURE, IT'S A LITTLE MURKY AND BLURRY, BUT SHADOWGATE 64 LIVES UP TO ITS NAMESAKE AND IS SURPRISINGLY ENJOYABLE.



- DESPITE ITS LOW-RES, MUDDIED LOOK, THE GAME MANAGES TO CONVINCINGLY CREATE AN ABSORBING MEDIEVAL SETTING
- THE TUROK-LIKE CONTROL WORKS EXTREMELY WELL

Grady Fiechter

B

WHEN A GAME IS RELEASED WITH NO HYPE, NO PRECONCEPTIONS, NO ANTICIPATION, IT ALREADY HAS A GREAT CHANCE OF SUCCESS. CASE IN POINT: SHADOWGATE 64. FOR ME, SHADOWGATE IS THE SURPRISE GAME OF THE YEAR, AN ABSORBINGLY ATMOSPHERIC ADVENTURE THAT CREATES AN ALWAYS INTERESTING, SOMETIMES INTRIGUING MEDIEVAL WORLD. UNDERMINED BY A FEW DESIGN MISSTEPS AND THE N64'S INABILITY TO PROPERLY CONVEY THE DESIGNERS' VISIONS, THE GAME IS NOT GREAT ENTERTAINMENT, BUT, WITH ITS MOODY SCORE, INTERESTING PUZZLES AND WELL-WRITTEN DIALOGUE IT NEVER LOST ITS PLEASANT HOLD ON ME. I HOPE TO RETURN TO THE DUSKY CASTLES OF SHADOWGATE ON SUPERIOR HARDWARE.



Super Smash Brothers • Hal • Nintendo



AS REVIEWED BY: Grady Fiechter (page 74)

SUPER SMASH BROS. IS THE PERFECT SCENARIO FOR A MULTIPLAYER FIGHTER, ANOTHER NINTENDO GEM WITH UNIVERSAL APPEAL.

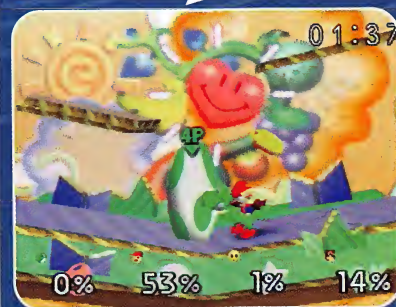
B+

- BRIGHT AND HAPPY NINTENDO FIGHTING WITH A CLASSIC CAST OF CHARACTERS
- AS WITH MANY FIGHTERS, IT FALTERS A BIT AS A ONE-PLAYER GAME

Mike Hobbs:

B+

NINTENDO AND HAL TEAM UP YET AGAIN FOR A GAME THAT SHOULD HAVE COME OUT A LONG TIME AGO. A CUTE, NINTENDO-STYLE FIGHTING GAME FEATURING A CAST OF THEIR CLASSIC CHARACTERS MUST HAVE BEEN CONCEPTUALIZED LONG AGO, AND I'M HAPPY THAT THE END RESULT IS AS FAST AND FUN AS I IMAGINED IT MIGHT BE. WHAT I DIDN'T IMAGINE WAS THAT IT WOULD BE A FOUR-PLAYER BASH-FEST OF THE HIGHEST ORDER. BEFITTING A NINTENDO GAME, THERE'S HUGE FUN HERE, AS YOU AND THREE OF YOUR FRIENDS ATTEMPT TO BLOW EACH OTHER OUT OF THE FIGHTING AREAS. SSB IS A LITTLE DRY AS A ONE-PLAYER GAME, BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT IT'S DESIGNED FOR.



- HAL RETURN WITH ONE OF THE MOST INGENUOUS FIGHTERS IN RECENT YEARS
- SEEING SAMUS IN 3D MADE ME PONDER THE METROID QUESTION EVEN MORE THAN I ALREADY AM...

Dave Halverson:

A-

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES... ALL OF THESE CHARACTERS AND ALL OF THEIR MUSIC IN ONE PLACE... A JOY TO BEHOLD. EACH TIME YOU CHOOSE A CHARACTER IT'S LIKE OPENING A CHAPTER OF YOUR GAMING LIFE. BUT THIS IS MORE THAN JUST A STROLL DOWN MEMORY LANE. WITH MODES INCLUDING STOCK, WHERE YOU CAN ASSEMBLE TEAMS, UP TO 4-PLAYER VS., AND TIME TRIAL, IT'S DEEP, TOO. USING THE BASIC MOVES IS EASY, BUT ONCE YOU GET INTO THE ADVANCED STUFF, THE GAME TAKES ON A STRATEGY ALL ITS OWN AS YOU TRY TO OUT-SMART EACH CHARACTERS ACUTE ABILITIES. CLEVER POWER-UPS COME INTO PLAY AS WELL, MAKING EACH FIGHT LIKE A MINI-GAME. THE ABILITY TO FREEZE THE ACTION AND VIEW THOSE SPECIAL MOMENTS IS AN ADDED BONUS, AS ARE THE COOL BONUS STAGES. A GREAT GAME.

arcade corner

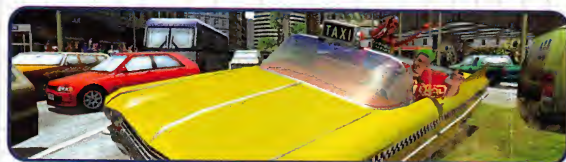
CRAZY TAXI *earn tips by giving passengers the ride of their lives*

Crazy Taxi is AM's first Naomi game, but they have seemingly mastered the system already with this high-speed driving action game that has you racing through the city streets in a crazy attempt to pick up fares and get them to their destination in time. The new-look Naomi cabinet is really cool, and the punk rock tracks by Bad Religion and Offspring add to the game's gritty atmosphere as well.

Your first order of business in

Crazy Taxi is to cruise the streets in search of potential customers, and when you try to pick them up, they'll tell you the location they wish to go to. You'll make more money on longer rides, so avoid picking up people who only want dropping off at the next corner. Once on the road, it's a race against time to get the customer to their destination as soon as possible. The arrow on the screen is useful, but it only points in the direction of the destination; it doesn't indicate the fastest route, so you'll need to memorize the city streets in order to take advantage of whatever shortcuts you can find. Once you get to the destination, you need to come to a complete stop for the customer to get out of your Taxi and pay the fare.

Depending on your driving techniques and the time taken, you can receive tips from happy customers. One of the best ways to make them happy is with a little crazy driving to add a little thrill to their lives. There are numerous kinds of techniques, such as Crazy Through, Crazy Drift and Crazy Jump, and if performed in sequence, you earn a Combo Bonus as well. But be warned: just one accident will throw away any chance of that!



Around the city are plenty of famous places that your passengers will want to go to. If you forget where you're supposed to be going on route, just press the START button to remind yourself.



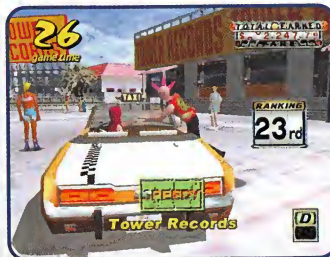


Although there are four types of taxi with four unique drivers, there are no major differences in the car handling, so just go for the one that suits your style. Image is everything when you're a taxi driver!



Get higher tips from your passengers by giving them the thrill of their lives by performing Crazy Thrusts or Crazy Drifts! They love it!

Depending on how long it takes you to reach your destination, the passenger's reaction will be different. It's better to be speedy than slow!



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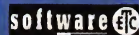


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TOYS R US

Ubi's ubiquitous Monaco GP continues to make the rounds, this time landing on PS and N64. Both versions offer up their own share of strengths and weaknesses, with neither being hugely superior to the other.

Predictably, it's in the graphics that we see the most obvious differences between the two iterations, as the options and basic gameplay are the same. To put it succinctly, the PS version has a smoother overall frame rate but fairly nasty pop-up and really bland looking trackside detail. The N64, on the other hand, is able to present a better graphical appearance with a much greater draw distance and far better trackside detail. It takes a hit,

though, in the frame rate, which has difficulty staying constant. Even with the slight choppiness inherent in the N64 version, it wins out graphically, having a more colorful and dense overall look. Advantage - N64.

When it comes to multi-player options, I have to give the edge to the PS, as it offers not only a two-player link-up mode, but also the ability for four-player simultaneous play through the link. Again, the N64 version looks a

bit better in split screen, but the PS at least offers the option of three- to four-player play. Advantage - PS.

Both versions, unfortunately, suffer from a control anomaly common to all Monaco (PC and DC) games. For whatever reason, cars seem to turn around a slightly odd axis, one that's a little too central to the vehicle. You don't get the sense of cars properly following the front wheels into a turn, and it's always felt a little unnatural to me. It doesn't really hamper the gameplay, but it reminds you that Bizarre's previous F-1 games seemed to have it right two years ago.

In the end, both are fairly solid if unspectacular conversions of the PC original. In a pinch, I'd go with the N64 version. It looks better overall, and I find the control with the N64 stick more satisfying than the Dual Shock. ✱

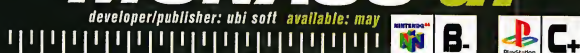


In our handy comparison shots, you can see the wealth of detail present along the same stretch of the Brazilian raceway in the N64 version (top).

gamers' republic sports '99

MONACO GP

developer/publisher: ubi soft available: may



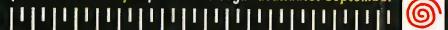
With the superior capabilities of the Dreamcast, NBA 2000 is on its way to setting a new precedent for sports gaming. Notice the detail on the jerseys.

Set to be released with the launch of the Dreamcast, NBA 2000 is the first in what is sure to be a long list of sports titles for Sega's premier 128-bit giant. Strutting their 1,600 motion-captured, 60 fps moves in high-res, architecturally correct arenas, NBA players have never looked so real: proper facial features and bone structures, given a wide range of expression through advanced animation algorithms, imbue over 400 individual modeled athletes with amazing realism. Taking advantage of the Dreamcast's invaluable rich texture capabilities, the game also places its attention to detail into the crowd, which waves banners plastered with player names. And what is a first for a basketball title, fully animated couches, bench and scorers table react to the action. Let's hope VC now pay the same level of attention to the gameplay. ✱

gamers' republic sports '99

NBA 2000

developer: visual concepts publisher: sega available: september



9 89 Studios' are ready for summertime at the park once again. This year's update has a distinctly better feel, enhanced gameplay and more statistics – a given for any updated console sports game. They also improved the graphics engine and tweaked pitching and hitting controls, making the game more true to life.


In addition to these improvements, 989 Studios are adding more variety into the gameplay modes. The Manager Mode enables realistic simulation of a manager's many decisions – good or bad –

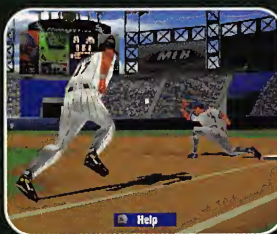
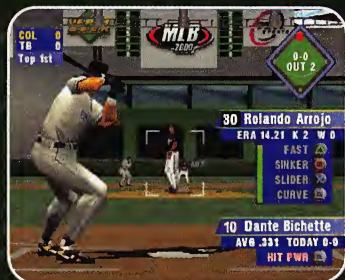
during the game and throughout the season. General Manager's Mode enables gamers to mimic almost every responsibility a real life General Manager faces, including handling the budget and the ability to sign up free agents, all without fear of losing a ridiculous salary for constructing a team built for the Little Leagues. On top of these, gamers will also see an enhanced Spring Training season this year.

The game also has full licenses of the MLB and the MLBPA, along with

flowing commentary provided by announcer Dave Campbell and Hall of Famer Vin Scully.

As graphics engines improve each year, the eerie accuracy of players' likeness and emotions are overhauled to try and represent each player uniquely. In MLB 2000 players are modeled to each of their heights and weights, and you'll even see their famous and not so famous faces. These computer counterparts will perform like their carbon-based forms, too. Over 175 batting stances were implemented to insure the elimination of any monotony when stepping up to the plate – a small but noteworthy addition to more intense animations strung everywhere in the game.

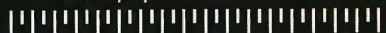
The competition this year is going to be stronger than ever. MLB 2000 had to be polished. 989 knew this, and are ready to throw the first pitch. 



gamers' republic sports '99

MLB 2000

developer/publisher: 989 studios available: now




Known better as football internationally, ALIS definitely deserves the boot. Okay, that may sound harsh, but with all the features this game boasts, especially the utilization of the PlayStation's hi-res graphics mode, the game should rival already existing software.

It seems the developers had all the right ideas, they just didn't come to adequately perfect one before instituting the next. It is apparent that the High-Res tag the game flaunts is a main reason to its underdeveloped gameplay. Analog control, on-the-fly play tactics and targeted shooting are all represented well. A healthy gathering of over 70 teams and customization of play formations, also fair well...really well. This is where the game truly shines. The programmers have allowed the gamer to have complete control of how each player on the field reacts.

Problems occur with the unforgivable amount of slowdown the game is plagued with; it begins when the players run on the field at the start of the game and just gets worse.



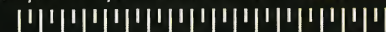
The predictability of where the ball is being passed to is upsetting, as if the game is being played underwater. Given the quick pace of a real soccer game you can imagine the tediousness of playing a single game, let alone an actual season. This frustration doubles when the character models pass straight through each other. During the game, players look decent (albeit not hi-res worthy), but when the camera closes in the, lack of polys per model becomes embarrassing.

With all the innovative conceptions fitted for the game, its slow and lackluster gameplay just draw the game into mediocrity. 

gamers' republic sports '99

ALEX LALAS SOCCER

developer: z-axis publisher: take 2 interactive available: now



world republic

World Republic Preview • developer/publisher **squaresoft** • available in japan now

chocobo racing



THE ONLY LIVING CHICKEN WITH ROCKET SKATES, BELONGS TO SQUARE...

How do Square do it? Game after game, they continue to pump out quality at a fever pitch. Whether it's role playing, fighting, action, strategy, shooting or racing, the Square name still stands for class. It was one thing when they released one or two new titles a year, but with half a dozen or so in the last twelve months and many more in development, it's amazing how they retain that distinct Trademark Square look and feel. I wasn't expecting much from their latest fixation on gaming's infamous yellow chicken, but alas, Chocobo Racing is a full-fledged cart romp in the vein of Mario Kart (with a little Motor Toon thrown in for good measure) that may just be the best of the bunch... until Crash rolls around. The fracas begins in true Final Fantasy fashion with a superb CG overture accompanied by a newly arranged version of the infamous chocobo serenade from the legendary role-playing series (for the record, each race ends with the trademark post battle hymn from FF7).

And borrowing a little from Yoshi's Story, the story mode (Legend of the Crystal Gems) uses diorama books throughout its eight chapters. Speaking of modes, there are 7 (hey, mode 7!) including Vs. Story, GP, Relay, and Time Trials. Like all good cart games Chocobo contains a plethora of vehicle-specific play mechanics and power-ups along with track-laden elements that provide projectiles, produce puddles, supply super thrust, etc. Taking the gameplay mechanics one step further, the vehicles in Chocobo racing are even more diverse than the characters. So, the engine in Chocobo's a giver, the music's a parody-fantastic, and the game has legs (chicken legs

albeit). Chocobo Racing

is due in the States this winter, when it'll be the chicken vs. the bandicoot.

Whoever prevails, PlayStation owners are the real winners. ♪



A. Sliding sideways through the haunted mansion, this circular tower winds three stories high! **B.** Severe pop-up... Diorama style! The Story mode literally unfolds before your eyes, ala Yoshi's Story.

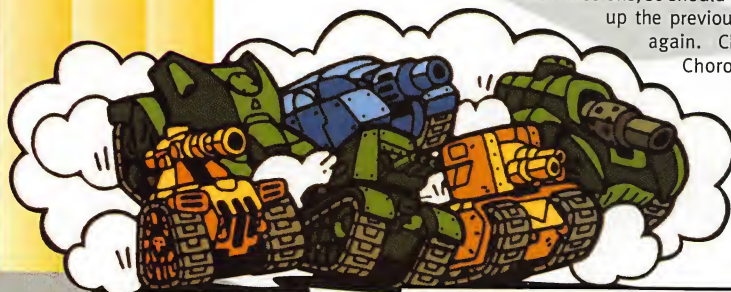
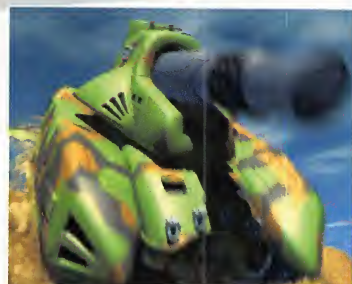
World Republic Review • developer/publisher **takara** • available in japan now

combat choro q



WE'RE GOIN' TO WAR! ALBEIT IN LITTLE ITTY BITTY TANKS...

Lovers of everything Choro-Q, prepare for battle! Takara continue to roll out the games in this series, which now spans a whopping ten titles! Do these guys go for the little super-deformed numbers or what? In one of their finest efforts yet, the miniaturized formula works especially well in a military setting. There's something really funny about putting into battle with an itty-bitty tank, especially after Takara's full-on hard-core mission briefing. There's a butt load of campaigns, too. From search and destroy, to guarding friendly's over the border (and everything in-between), Takara carry everything out in diligent military style, from the motif to the music. The traditionally sturdy Choro-Q engine is admittedly looking a bit ragged, but overall it gets the job done better than most. As with every game in the series, the action runs deep with options. Get out those Japanese dictionary people! From spare parts to camouflage it's all good, but it's also all in Japanese. Those with zero Kanji skills needn't worry, though: through basic trial and error the menu's are rather self explanatory once you begin to stock-pile money and upgrade your machine. And, you can save at any time between missions, so should you screw up, just load up the previous save and have at it again. Chances are Combat Choro-Q won't make a showing over here (it might tank), so if you're into a little pint-sized military madness, the import's the only way. ♪



World Republic says "Although the engine is somewhat archaic, the military melee is at once comedic, and entertaining. If you're into slow paced military campaigns, Combat Choro-Q is for you!" C+

chocobo racing © squaresoft 1999. combat choro q © takara 1999.



World Republic
Monthly Import Game Reviews
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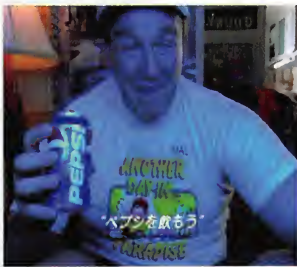
World Republic Review • developer/publisher KID • available in japan now

pepsi man



EXPLORE THE JOY OF COLA WITH PEPSI JAPAN'S RECYCLED KING OF QUENCH...

I suppose it was bound to happen sooner or later, but on the PlayStation? Now that's a surprise. Anyone who remembers Sega's exalted fighter, Fighting Vipers, will recognize the smooth chrome guise of Pepsi Man, one of the coolest (pun intended) hidden characters in recent memory. But Pepsi Man's not fighting scantily clad females this time out. He's doing something much more important, and politically correct...providing Pepsi Cola to dehydrated pedestrians! That's right, when those Pepsi machines run dry and the people begin to riot as a result, who you gonna call? Yep, there's now a game where the goal is to quench thirst, and it's branded like a pig in Oscar Meyers pen: the jewel case, the CD and the game is plastered, as one would imagine, with Pepsi, Pepsi, and more Pepsi. Actually, the game itself isn't half bad. As the environments whisk by, Pepsi Man must avoid all manner of obstacles and pitfalls by jumping, dodging, and sliding to reach his goal. Of course, as the game progresses the courses get more complex, to include motor vehicles, semis, homes to invade, two-way traffic, huge holes in the street, construction zones, and other such perilous hazards. There are even cheesy Pepsi commercials and segues, featuring some no-name dork in splendid FMV. The game spans three cities – San Francisco, New York, and Pepsi City (don't ask) – and one state, Texas. Hey, it's an import, maybe they think Texas is just a big city. Why does this game exist you ask? Hell, I don't know, why do people listen to N-Sync? It's a strange, strange world. Collectors item? No doubt about it. **F**



World Republic says "This strangely appealing cola caper is actually quite addicting, especially if you dare a friend to chug a Pepsi every time the P-Man dies! It's great for a laugh and it's pretty fun!" **B-**

World Republic Preview • developer nanoOn studio publisher scel • available in japan now

um jammer lammy



THE BIZARRE PARAPPA SERIES CONTINUES...

In Japan, Um Jammer Lammy has been climbing the Top 10 charts for weeks on end. It's a certified hit, selling close to (at the time of this writing) half a million copies already. Many import gamers are looking forward to this "Parappa 2," anticipating more of the same lyrical gameplay and hip-hop humor. Surprise! Um Jammer Lammy casts a new star, a mostly new cast of wacky characters to overcome, and emphasizes a rock guitar sound instead of just lyrics and voice.

When you tap the buttons with Lammy, she jams on her guitar in response to the computer character's voice. The electric guitar sound itself is high quality and has tons of different varieties. The freaky stages are nice (Parappa quality, with deeper 2D/3D backgrounds), most of the songs are really cool, and the lyrics are absolutely outrageous – especially in the ultra-bizarre maternity ward, where people assume Lammy is pregnant after she becomes bloated from a fireman's supply of donuts! Hehe!

Overall, there's more to Um Jammer Lammy than Parappa. There's a vs. mode for two-player button-pressing mania, better CG FMV between stages, a more risqué storyline (with less obvious, more subtle humor), and incredible secret options once the game is completed. These include a full Parappa game, complete with unique CG cut scenes (of lesser quality – no disc space!) that tie into Um Jammer's storyline perfectly, and mostly superior hip-hop remixes of each tune for the Rapper's lyrical prowess to exploit. There are also several bonus modes involving Um Jammer in co-op or vs. battles with Parappa and UJ's arch nemesis from the underworld, Rammy. Each mode can be enjoyed against another player or the computer (at varying skill levels). The only weakness is Parappa's low sample rate, but it's not offensive.

Um Jammer Lammy offers more of the same fun that made Parappa such a hit, and it's more of a complete package, with a disturbingly surreal comedy plotline. It's not quite as appealing as Parappa your first go through, but once you complete the extra modes and tie the story together, you'll come to realize the game is just as worthwhile to own. **F**



Playstation Review

dr. slum

BAND BY BAND

Dr. Slum comes as quite a surprise. Somewhat of a cross between Tail Concerto and Mega Man Dash in terms of the engine and gameplay, Dr. Slum features a mixture of exploration, action, and platforming set among the Doc's peculiar home, detailed townscapes, and free-roaming action levels. Initially, the game takes a while to unfold, but once Arale's acquired her skills, it's off to the prehistoric era and the first of eight rather large free-roaming areas. Complete with big-time bosses, vast polygonal townscapes, a wide array of environmental factors and a cool little interactive story, Dr. Slum is one of those rare little gems you'll be glad you sought out long after the PlayStation is out of fashion. **C+**



World Republic Preview • developer/publisher **squaresoft** • available in japan now**saga frontier 2****Beautiful, watercolor-like backdrops mark this gorgeous sequel from Square**

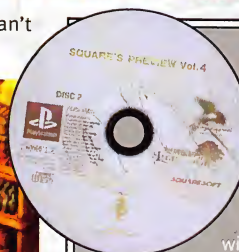
In this day and age of the polygon fetish, games like *Saga Frontier 2* need to be greeted with open arms and thankful hearts. On 32-bit especially, it's getting harder and harder to find hand-drawn art, much less the sort of superb work that's gone into Square's latest RPG. The 2D, watercolor-like backdrops are like a breath of sweet, fresh air, the sort that makes renders and real-time polys seem cold and lifeless.

Saga Frontier 2 will unfold through many different scenarios, with you assuming control of different characters along the way. This should keep the variety high, though I can't comment on the quality of the scenarios based on this Japanese final.

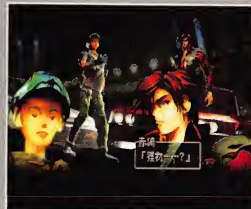
The battle system looks to be fairly intuitive and enjoyable, with some new features such as the choice to battle singly or in a team and the ability to combine character's attacks. Sony's little

PocketStation also comes into use, as you can download mini-games and earn items on the go. These items can then be uploaded into the game or beamed to another Pocket-Station for easy swapping.

Square plans to release *Saga Frontier 2* here in early 2000, so we'll have to wait till then to comment on the quality of the story and quest. But our cursory look at the Japanese version has revealed glorious hand-drawn graphics, great music, and a compelling battle system. We can't wait to see what it's all about. >=<

**bonus disc included!**

The Japanese release of *Saga Frontier 2* includes a nice bonus disc with playable demos of Square's *Racing Lagoon*, their "High Speed Driving" RPG, and *Legend of Mana*, their other beautiful hand-drawn game. The *Racing Lagoon* demo shows off the odd style of art that Square have come up with for this title, with lanky, mechanical-looking characters animating through dissolves over pre-rendered backdrops. Battles in this game take the form of real-time racing against rivals. *Legend of Mana*, on the other hand, is a more traditional action/RPG, one blessed with artwork even more lush than that on display in *Saga Frontier 2*. The amount of color and detail put into the backdrops shown on this brief demo was absolutely mouth watering.



[publisher] nintendo
[genre] action
[system] snes
[year] 1995

KIRBY SUPER STAR



Nintendo's, or rather, HAL's little pink blob Kirby never garnered a huge following on these shores, and I guess that's not too surprising. For a game culture that seems to relish the hard-core over the hard-fluff, the little pink fellow must have been a hard sell. Indeed, many gamers over the age of 13 wouldn't want to be caught dead playing a Kirby game. And that's a shame really, because this game, Kirby Super Star, is literally overflowing with fun and addictive gameplay of the highly cute and accessible Nintendo variety. If you're big enough to get over the aesthetic, or like me, actually enjoy it, this is a blast of a 16-bit game.



Kirby Super Star is, as it says so prominently on the package, eight games in one. You control the little inhaling hero through challenging timing events, straight, old-school platforming, and running competition. The little pink fellow takes on all manner of guises throughout the eight games, from a Link-ish adventurer to a Ryu-like, headband-wearing fighter. He's damn cute and completely non-offensive (probably why he hasn't much of a following).

You can find Kirby Super Star on the cheapy-cheap out there, and I highly recommend it. If you can stomach the look, you'll find tons of gameplay here, and I challenge anyone not to enjoy the hell out of this game.

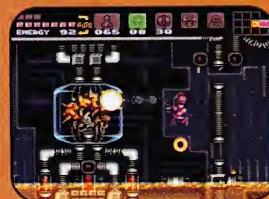
<<retro video game assimilation>>

There is an area in Super Metroid that links rooms through pits of quick sand. It's not uncommon to get mired in the flow of sand, and attempting to leap free can quickly become a laborious process. Every time I play this marvelous game I am amazed at the tangible physics of the scene: the strain and gravity that overcome the Samus character is amazingly translated through the controls, and for that moment my reality is one step closer to Samus' world.

I recall this particular part of the game because of its uncommon visceral presence; I am fascinated by it every time I play. But this is only one part of countless design pieces that lock together to form one of the most complete video game universes I have ever explored.

This is a game made by masters of their craft.

For its time, Super Metroid was a graphics showcase on the SNES, and even by today's standards the game manages to create a believable setting of a cavernous, sci-fi alien world — a cold, mysterious setting that, for me, has no peer. From the incapacitated robots in the crashed space ship that eventually are charged to life to the dinosaur-like creature that leaps from a pit of lava where it had its carcass melted away, the game is an endless creative parade of indelible moments. But as a perfect marriage of action and exploration, Super Metroid is as much about inspired gameplay as it is atmosphere. To play Super Metroid is to experience video game making of a remarkable order.



SUPER METROID

[publisher] nintendo
[genre] action/adv.
[system] snes
[year] 1994



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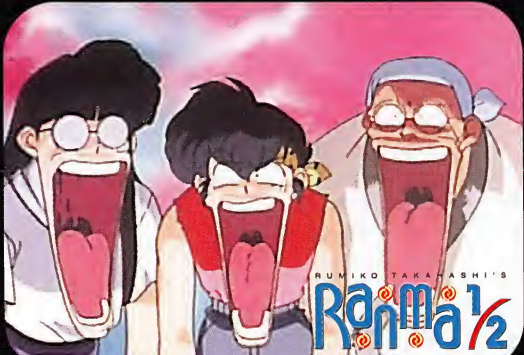




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reviewed by dave halverson

★★★★★ 1/2 ACTION/ADVENTURE

Story: A young witch (she's 15 and she wants to stay that way!) discovers a resurrection spell in her great grandmother's spell book and uses it to resurrect a vampire (Master Mosquiton) and his allies, whom she had secretly stowed away in the family crypt. For centuries her clan have been in search of the O-part, the ultimate power that blesses its benefactor with eternal youth. Once she has the aid of Master Mosquiton to help her find it, all she has to do is coax him into leaving the clock shop in Shanghai where the foursome hold up. You see, Mosquiton's not your everyday vampire. He's more like a vampiric equivalent of our old friend Lupin. Half human, he's able to live among mortals and, is quite content to do so. In order to get his vampiric half to, shall we say, rise to the occasion, he must taste blood. Once this happens he becomes a full-blown blood sucker with dark-red bleeding eyes and an unquenchable thirst for the old red stuff. This is a good thing, because Inoha is going to need all the help the Master and his minions, Hono and Yuri, can give. They aren't the only ones seeking eternal youth. Another faction is after the O-part as well. Count Sangermaine and the rapidly aging Lord he serves also desire the sacred object. Sound spooky? Well, it is, and then it isn't. A mixture of tongue-in-cheek humor and vampirish banter, *MoM* brings the best of two worlds together – classic-anime situation comedy, and brilliantly realized horror. The end result is one of the best anime series since *Lupin*, as Mosquiton serves his tenacious new master Inoha. She's got the adventurous soul of Lara Croft and the witchy ways of Fairuza Balk (that hotty from *The Craft*). All she wants is immortality. Is that so much to ask? This is going to be a great series.

Animation: High quality is in effect when it needs to be. The pyrotechnics and cool digital effects are handled very well, and the fights rock the kazba.

Dubbing: It doesn't get much better. ADV have mastered the art of the dub.

Character design: A little *Lupin*, a little *Ruin Explorers...* and a hint of *Castlevania*, as Mosquiton does resemble Alucard quite a bit. And Hono's right out of a Capcom fighter. In other words, superb.

Soundtrack: Playful, haunting melodies reminiscent of something you'd hear from Danny Elfman, mixed with a *Lupin*-ish opening theme commingling with Skillful Horns, piano, and plucky old Fender guitar.

Fight Scenes: Mosquiton can only fight after he drains a pint or two out of Inoha, then, after each fight, he tries to kill her, but always ends up with a stake in his heart. So, she has to revive him with her blood and the cycle begins again. It's a peculiar relationship. The fights are awesome.

Highlight: The first fight scene vs. Count Sangermaine.

Final Analysis: Known for choice acquisitions, John and the crew over at ADV have never been more dead on (pun intended). A perfect fit for the horror-thirsty U.S. anime scene.



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KNIGHTS OF RAMUNE

•1999 SOFTWARE SCULPTORS
60 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH

reviewed by dave halverson

★★★★ ACTION/ADVENTURE/COMEDY

Story: A pair of celestial virgins, Cacao and Parfait (you'll want to become a member of this order, trust me), is sent on what seems an honorable quest: Fly to outer space and search out and rescue (if need be) the Fourth Warrior, Ramune, Champion of the Galaxy. Too bad that when they arrive they discover that Ramune is a tyrannical bastard, bent on ruling the galaxy with his fleet of mechs (piloted by sexy babes, of course), Giga Genos. Hey, children are being abused, women are being terrorized, and, well, Ramune is a major rectum cavity who deserves to be drawn and quartered.

Animation: Good quality throughout with shimmering moments of fluidity where it counts. Certain body parts take on a gelatinous guise you might say. High quality.

Dubbing: Very good. Software Sculptors do complete justice to the characters in the tradition of *The Slayers*.

Character design: If you like your anime sexy, you've come

to the right place. Definitely not for the kids – voluptuous women rule the day. The mechs, as well as the entire cast (yes, even you PQ), are skillfully drawn. Very *Slayers*, and very, very good.

Soundtrack: Quality arrangements accompany each scenario, blending well with the action, drama, or comedy on screen.

Fight Scenes: Borrowing a little from *Evangelion* (the huge mechs are piloted by shapely females girdled in fluid) mixed with *Gundam*-like confrontations and *Macross*-reminiscent headgear, the mech battles are event filled. The fight in episode 2 ruled.

Highlight: They are many and I'm quite sure you'll find a few all your own. Me, I'm a sucker for anime chicks, so I'm gonna go with psycho-saturation version 2!

Final Analysis: Knights of Ramune was created by Kasumi Hasegawa (*Slayers*, *Slayers Next*) Osamu Horiuchi (*Cutey Honey*) and Yoshinori Sayama (*Birdy the Mighty*). That's good company. With *Ramune* they are pushing the boundaries of titillation (with beautifully realized female heroines) in a space-combat environment. These artisans meld the two together masterfully, as it never goes over the top either way... Well, after the first two minutes that is.



FIST OF THE NORTH STAR

•1984 TOEI ANIMATION • 1999 MANGA
75 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH

reviewed by dave halverson

★★★★ KUNG FU ACTION/ADVENTURE

Story: Steeped in tradition, the *Fist of the North Star* is one of the most widely recognized anime titles around. While dated (the 36-episode series ran on Japanese TV in 1984-1985), it is still a viable commodity, although the story, which has been copied numerous times by Hollywood, seems somewhat worn out. In a post-apocalyptic society where money is as worthless as human life, water is power, and savage biker thugs and mutants rule by killing anyone and anything that gets in their path. The only man capable of restoring balance to the world is Kenshiro, master of a special fighting technique, Hokuto Shinken, from which his victims are shocked from within, causing their bodies to rupture and literally swell and then blow apart. Kenshiro goes as far counting down their remaining seconds on Earth, giving them a chance to repent, then, pop goes the bad guy. There's even a Genesis game (Last Battle/Fist of the North Star) based on the story, and the Japanese ver-

sion features spurting blood! The first three episodes forge the relationship between Ken, Bart, and Melinda, a mute girl who Ken bonds with after she shows him kindness. Her parents being killed right in front of her robbed her of her voice, and Ken restores it through his magical soul. Bart, a clever thief and a con, is tagging along mainly for the food and water, although he seems to have a heart down there somewhere. Like three episodes of *Kung-Fu*, the first three episodes consist of Ken saving villagers as he goes from place to place ridding them of the scum of the Earth. Episode four, however, promises to turn up the heat a little, as Ken's rivals now know of his deeds and send out equally brutal forces to end his life.

Animation: It's old, and it looks old. But the death scenes are animated very well.

Character Design: Old school *Mad Max*-style. Cool apocalyptic look and feel, and nicely exaggerated mutants and the like.

Soundtrack: Full-on sitcom branding. It's very good anime fare.

Fight Scenes: Splashy! Hardcore blood and guts.

Highlight: Heads contort, bodies burst. Ken just kicks so much ass!

Final Analysis: Manga belong doing anime. It's good to see them back with a notable series. *Fist* should do very well for them.



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GENOCYBER

•1993 ARTMIC/PLEX. •1998 US MANGA CORPS.
60 MINUTES •DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by mike hobbs



SCI-FI/ADVENTURE

Story: Episode 4: The now dormant Genocyber (a human-created monstrosity responsible for the complete decimation of Earth's cities) lies in wait as we are introduced to Ryu and his blind girlfriend, the psychic Mel. They've just arrived in the town of Ark de Grande where they find a fascistic ruling body and underground rebellion, convinced that the sleeping Genocyber is to be their savior. Episode 5: Having been accepted by the cult as a sort of chosen one, Mel unleashes the power of the Genocyber just as the fascist pigs decide to eliminate the rebellion. Watch everything go boom. Oh, and Ryu gets roughed up in the hands of the law.



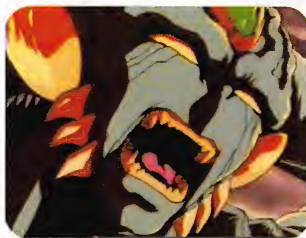
Episode 5: Having been accepted by the cult as a sort of chosen one, Mel unleashes the power of the Genocyber just as the fascist pigs decide to eliminate the rebellion. Watch everything go boom. Oh, and Ryu gets roughed up in the hands of the law.

Animation: Pretty good for an OVA, with special attention paid to scenes of mass destruction.

Dubbing: Inconsistent, with Ryu's voice being especially flat. He lets out one of the most half-hearted screams I've ever heard.

Character Design: Good, with a touch of realism and well-rendered eyes.

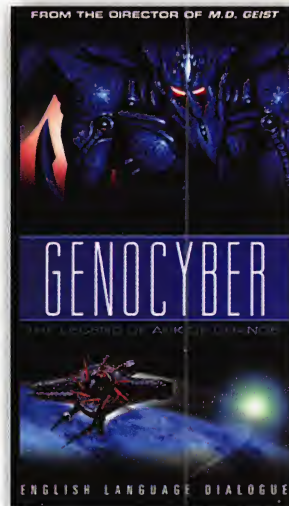
Soundtrack: Completely unremarkable filler.



Fight Scenes: Not much here, but the climactic destruction and flashbacks of city decimation are very well done.

Highlight: Explosive finale.

Final Analysis: The convoluted story is a bit hard to follow, but Genocyber's odd and dense plot makes for interesting viewing, if not the most entertaining. If you've been following the series, these two episodes appear to take the series in a different direction, but then it all ends in a big scene of destruction.



LEGEND OF CRYSTANIA

•1996 Mizuno Ryo & Group NME 1999 ADV
60 MINUTES •DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by mike griffin



1/2 FANTASY/ADVENTURE

Story: Barbas has returned! Having risen from the abyss and utterly destroyed the Dragon god (one-handed decapitations are always good), Barbas systematically hunts down and squashes his former henchmen, then turns his attention to the gods of Crystania. He is the new Gods' King, and his malevolent rage knows no limits. Nobody ethereal or human

can put up any physical resistance, so mass enslavement across the world begins. Crystania's best warriors, however, have entered the Chaos Realm where King Ashram is trapped. Redon and Pirotresse penetrate the depths of his heart, even as they battle their own nightmares, and good Ashram snaps out of his trance.

Character Design: I still love these characters. This time Pirotresse shows how strong she is, while Redon displays some surprising swordplay.

Animation: Action sequences are often stunning, especially when the gore piles on. This is often.



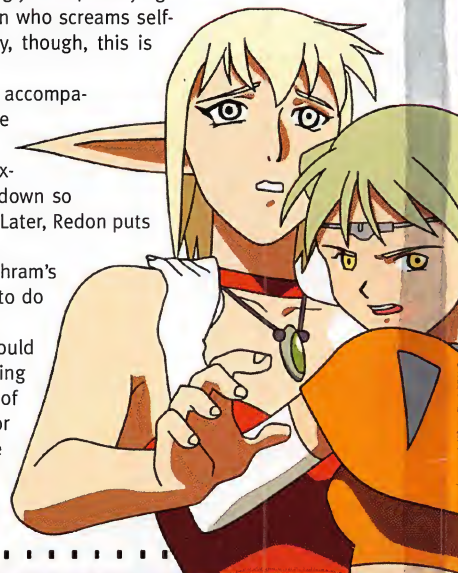
Dubbing: A few characters are amazingly weak/annoying in the dub version, such as whiny Redon who screams self-righteous crap way too much. Mostly, though, this is very tolerable dubbing.

Soundtrack: Really impressive fantasy accompaniment. Rarely a cheesy tune, and the ominous moments are well done.

Fight Scenes: Barbas crushes his ex-conies like bloody grapes. They go down so brutally. Internal explosions – splash! Later, Redon puts up a great fight in defense of Ashram.

Highlight: The final battle for King Ashram's soul is awesome. Pirotresse is forced to do something terrible to herself.

Final Analysis: At some point you should watch the entire series so far, beginning with the big movie. *Crystania* is sort of like a good *Lodoss War* replacement for fans of the fantasy/anime genre. The action animation is always good and the characters' designs are great.



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CITY HUNTER: THE MOTION PICTURE

• 1999 ADV FILMS
90 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by dave halverson

★★★1/2 ACTION/COMEDY

Story: Like an over-sexed Dan Tana (remember *Vegas?*), Joe, the City Hunter, makes the anime scene again in this 90 min. full-length feature. Hired to check in to the whereabouts of a young actress' long-lost brother after she receives a mysterious bouquet of roses, Joe and his crew soon find themselves involved in something much more serious than a simple missing persons case.

Amy's brother turns out to be a psycho-sausage ex-soldier who was left to die by his own government, and he'll go pretty far to wipe the pain of the past away, as he seeks revenge against God and country. This explains why he keeps blowing things up! Eventually, the future of Tokyo and the life of his sister hangs in the balance. Switching between the serious elements of the story and the tongue-in-cheek back story (Joe wants to score, but every time he gets close, his assistant

beats him into submission), *City Hunter* is an interesting twist on the spy formula.

Animation: Mostly pretty budge, although there are a few nice moments. Let's call it fair overall. It is 90 minutes long, though.

Dubbing: Very good overall with a couple over-the-top performances.

Character Design: Way too simplistic for my taste. Everything looks realistic, pretty much.

Soundtrack: Nicely arranged, very well produced. This is a real movie with a real movie soundtrack.

Fight Scenes: Things blow up very nicely and when Joe gets his butt kicked the animation kicks in to high gear.

Highlight: Joe's daring attempt to save Amy from the bullet train.

Final Analysis: While *City Hunter* doesn't set any new standards in animation, it has a very clean, sharp look and is colored nicely. It also has some great dialogue and humor. I don't know about the vast distinction between the drama and comedy in the story, but it certainly is different.



SORCERER HUNTERS

• 1998 SA-RO-MW/BA 1999 ADV
60 MINUTES • DUBBED IN ENGLISH
reviewed by mike griffin

★★★1/2 ACTION/COMEDY ADVENTURE

Story: The Sorcerer Hunters are on the trail of a reckless sorcerer. In episode one, however, Tira and Chocolate are chasing after Carrot down the Saint Light River. Carrot is obsessed with some women near the river, in his typically horn-ball way, and he desperately tries to get his \$\$\$ on with them.

In the following episode, the Hunters are sent in to a town to investigate a crazed madman dabbling in magic. As they quickly discover, his powers are much greater than it would seem! Be prepared for *Sorcerer Hunters Kids*, and a truly bizarre fascination.

Animation: Good quality, but rarely great. At times you'll be very impressed by the action scenes, and the ladies' transformations are very smooth.

Dubbing: Pretty good. Chocolate and Tira can become annoying very quickly, but the delivery (in general) is alright. There's some surprising humor now and then (read: laugh out loud) and the English actors convey these passing moments extremely well.

Character Design: The transformed versions of the ladies look great, while the guys on the team are all typical designs. Thankfully the repartee between Carrot, Tira and Chocolate is funny, adding loads of personality.

Soundtrack: Good pop-style choons, loads of incidental accompaniment.

Fight Scenes: Not really a "fight" but more of an action escape, the last episode is full of cool action.

Highlight: Strange humor.

Final Analysis: This series should be heating up soon. All we need now is more exposure to the other characters.



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Emeraldas, will be greeted by much adulation throughout the anime fan base. And respectfully so. We often see rendered images in place of animated ones, but seldom, if ever, will you see the two melded together as masterfully as you will in select scenes throughout this broad adventure. From ships to shields to smoke, new techniques are at work here to a stellar end. And besides the



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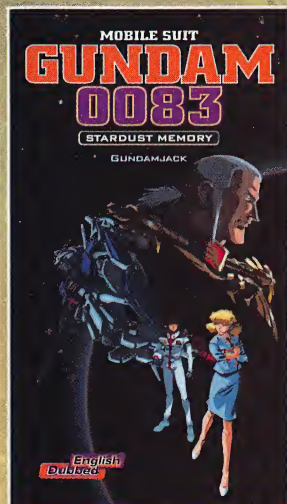
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TOYCOM

Gamers' Republic
COMPUTER & CONSOLE ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

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Tenth

Tenth (bottom left), a Frankenstein-like creature (an evil scientist's tenth attempt to create life) with reasoning skills, busts loose from the lab and gravitates towards a sexy young girl with magic powers, Esperanza (far left). Later, action figures are made! Cute girls and massive mutated monsters from ReSaurus. A stunning, great acquisition! Look for the toy line this summer!

SPAWN

THE DARK AGES

Welcome to the further adventures of McFarlane Toys, the benchmark company that helped Spawn the current action figure revolution. The new Dark Ages XIV look as hardcore as ever. Pictured left to right: The Scarlet Edge, Viper King, Iguanus and Tuskadon, The Necromancer and Spawn the Black Heart. Beautiful, all of them.



GR SYNTHETICS

THE TENTH • SPAWN: DARK AGES • CRASH



CRASH

BANDICOOT

With Crash Bandicoot Series 2, ReSaurus continue their tradition of high-quality Crash figures for purveyors of the bandicoot everywhere. It's good to see N-Gin again after I kicked his sorry arse in Crash and Crash 3! Also pictured are Deep Dive Crash, Moto Crash (motorcycle not pictured), Wave Runner Coco and Dingo Dile. I beat him down too! Somewhere Jason and the boyz at ND have to be awfully proud.

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BRUCE LEE

Hooooaaa... Bruce Lee lives on in these well-defined 7-inch figures with 15 points of articulation and real fabric costumes, from Toycom. Also available is a stunning 12-inch model from the "Real Action Heroes" which features 33 points of articulation and three snap-on hand sets! Hi-Ya!



Bone fans everywhere rise and shout halitosis, your favorite characters from the comic have arrived, and the ones you don't see are coming in the next wave. From the left, it's Fone Bone, Smiley Bone, and Rat Creature. Thorn's on the way (as an exclusive through Diamond Comic Distributors) to polish off the series. Jeff Smith's bone is very popular... Can I say that?

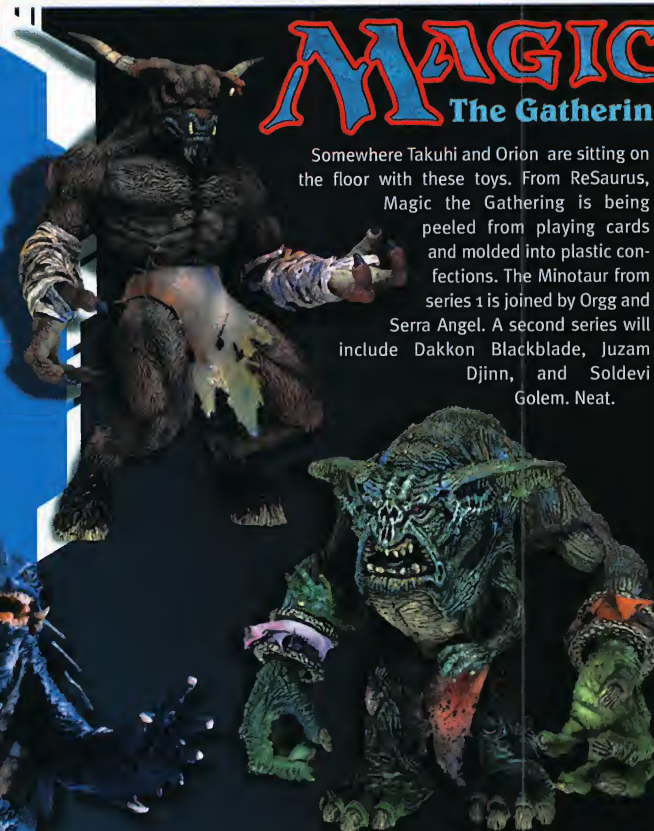


BONE

MAGIC

The Gathering

Somewhere Takuhi and Orion are sitting on the floor with these toys. From ReSaurus, Magic the Gathering is being peeled from playing cards and molded into plastic confections. The Minotaur from series 1 is joined by Orgg and Serra Angel. A second series will include Dakkon Blackblade, Juzam Djinn, and Soldevi Golem. Neat.



Toycom's impressive Gamera statue (available flying or fighting) from Gamera 3, in pre-painted soft vinyl. Sculpted by Hideo Kawada, the new Gamera features a more turtle-like guise as he attempts to rise above the larger Godzilla franchise in Japan. We're pulling for you, Gamera!

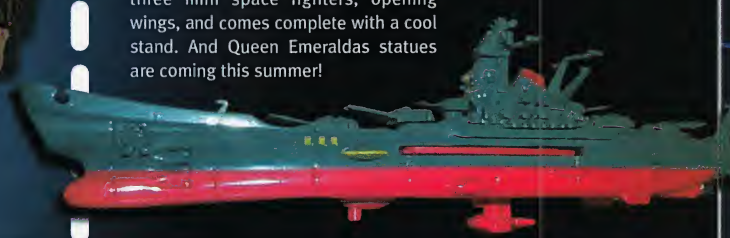
GAMERA

2000

[YAMATO]

宇宙戦艦ヤマト

Docking in stores now, Toycom's impressive Space Battleship Yamato (a die-cast/plastic hybrid) from Galaxy Express 999 features three mini space fighters, opening wings, and comes complete with a cool stand. And Queen Emeraldas statues are coming this summer!



[GR SYNTHETICS]

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...incredible detail...

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Gamers' Re(public) Music Reviews

GAMERS' REPUBLIC INTERVIEWS

The movie that raises your testosterone level as you watch it, and I now regard as one of the greatest science fiction features of all time, has left behind a sweet little by-product in the shape of a CD. Although the *Matrix* soundtrack obviously has a couple of token tracks on it meant to push more out the door (Marilyn's "Rock is dead" plays in the commercial and end credits only), it is on the whole a kick-ass compilation. Including tracks from Prodigy, Propeller Heads, Rage Against the Machine, Ministry, Meat Beat Manifesto, Rob D, and Lunatic Calm, at the very least you're bound to hear some new sounds worth investigating. For me, Rob Zombie's "Dragula" remix, Rammstein's "Du Hast" and Monster Magnet's "Look to Your Orb for the Warning" make it all good. For what it's worth, the sleeve design is excellent too, depicting Keanu, Larry, and uberbabe Carrie-Ann Moss doing what they do. For the record, the *Matrix* recorded the biggest April debut ever, raking in an impressive \$37 million its first week (whoa) followed by an impressive \$22 million for week two. Big-budget sci-fi has been in search of some respect – looks like it found some. Look for the follow-up story (in comic-book form) at the film's website (www.whatisthematrix.com) and rejoice in the fact that the Wachowski brothers are thinking trilogy.



Dave Halverson

THE MATRIX SOUNDTRACK
Warner Brothers, Domestic

B



Sai-So means "reborn," and with this release Kodo's material has indeed been given new life. For those who haven't encountered Kodo in their musical travels, it is the massive Japanese collective who perform almost exclusively with traditional drums and percussives. Their live shows are incredible displays of skill and showmanship. DJs have sampled Kodo's sound for over a decade, so the Japanese ensembles decided to officially release the original *Ibuki* tapes (their gorgeous '96 album) to a select few talented DJs and producers. The resulting remix collection is an eclectic mix of sounds that roam directly through the source material, embracing every component in beats and pieces that are never too derivative or similar. Take Kevin Yost's "Deep & Ethnic Mix," for example. Through intelligent, selective use of Moto-fumi Yamaguchi's "The Hunted," it rolls through gentle sequences of soothing spatial bass and subtle break loops while a light-hearted xylophone trickles its serenade across the rhythm line. There's "Wax On," an energetic beast loaded with Kodo's ethnic samples, yet heavily manipulated to flow amongst wickedly funky guitar hooks. One particular remix on Sai-So – truly a profoundly peaceful excursion – is provided by ambient master Bill Laswell. Based on Tetsuro Naito's original track work, with inspiration from Yamaguchi-san's title track "Ibuki," his masterful bass and space molds "Nana-fushi" into a lulling nine-minute epic. And while Sai-So contains slightly lackluster remixes, such as Strobe's take on "Nana-fushi," it is a fine contemporary compliment to the incomparable legends of Kodo.

Mike Griffin

KODO (remix project) Sai-So
Sony Music/RED, Domestic

B

GR-Raymond, when did you start playing games?

Raymond: When I was seven years old, back with the 2600. Back in the day! I had the 5200 for about a week and a half when my friend went away to the mountains, I had the Intellivision, Colecovision, and I even had the little Vectrex, remember that? Oh, and the Nintendo, the Genesis...I've had everything except the Commodore 64, the Atari 800, or the Vic 20.

GR- And what are some of your favorite classics from "back in the day"?

Raymond: Some of my favorite games? Oh man...Burger-time! [Room erupts in laughter, with comments like "Are you surprised?"] Asteroids was awesome too. I used to practice all day. Yeah, and Track & Field...remember the pencil trick? Just put a pencil in between your fingers and tap-tap back and forth!

GR- So how did you guys get together?

Raymond: The band got together in LA. I'm from Leisure Valley, but born and raised in LA Dino's from ElCentro, very near the Mexican border. Christian here, I think he's from Brussels? No, it's Belgium, that's right. So everyone sort of got together in LA, in October of 1990.

GR- Have you ever worked together in the past, pre-Fear Factory?

Raymond: A couple of us were in a band once called Ulceration. It was more of a slow, dark, industrial sound. We were in another band too, but I can't tell you the name of it.

GR- Why, was it Buttrick or something? [Explosion of laughter ensues.]

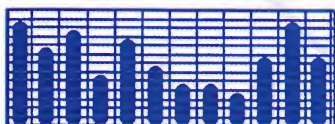
Raymond: No, no! It was like hard punk stuff.

Christian: They saw me playing upright one time, and they thought I was a bass player. I wasn't really a guitar player at that point though. I was just on vacation in LA, hanging out with Biohazard, and when these guys met me they said they knew a band for me. I said, "Cool" and they said, "You're in, you're in!"

Raymond: The rest of the group was introduced to Christian in a bar. The only question we asked is, "Can you triple pick?" [laughter] That's all we needed to know!

GR- How did you become involved with all this video game stuff?

Raymond: I worked at a video game store, Game Dude-



FEAR FACTORY



AS PROMISED, WE'RE BACK WITH PART 2 OF OUR TOMMY TALLARICO/FEAR FACTORY BEHIND-THE-SCENE INTERVIEW. THIS TIME WE SIT DOWN FOR AN ULTRA-CANDID (HELL, I'D JUST CALL IT HANGING OUT) INTERVIEW WITH THE HARDCORE GROUP FEAR FACTORY. ALONG WITH TOMMY T., THESE GUYS WERE TOILING AWAY ON A BRAND NEW SOUNDTRACK FOR ACCOLADE'S DEMOLITION RACER.

GR- Game Dude, really? We know some people who used to work there. We used to work with them at another magazine before we left to start GR...

Raymond: Yeah, I know one of those guys. I know that magazine too. You know, Tommy [Tallarico] introduced me to your boss at E3 last year... Halverson, right? Yeah, he was a cool guy. We were there for the Messiah show...

GR- But you don't work at Game Dude anymore, right?

[Laughter] Raymond: No, I haven't worked there for a while now, maybe three years. I used to work one or two days every now and then and I was paid with credit. So I worked for games, basically. I'd come off tours and do that, just to get my games!

GR- How many games do you have in your personal collection?

Raymond: I have 335 games right now, exactly.

GR- Damn! So what other games have you worked on?

Raymond: NFL Xtreme, Carmageddon PC, and PS version soon, Carmageddon 2 PS version, Test Drive 5, Test Drive Off Road 2, and Messiah...whenever that one comes out [laughs]. Oh, and there's Turok 2, but not really. They ripped us off! Some of the music sounds a lot like Fear Factory though, for real. I know the guy at Iguana, right. So I was down there checking out their South Park game back when it was in development, and they told me, "Turok 2's almost done, and the guys want to show it to you," so they did. When I saw it playing it had no sound, and they said it wasn't done yet, but the game was a month away from coming out! So when the game came out and I heard some of the music sounding so much like us I was like, "Oh my god!" It's funny 'cause one of the guys that did the game likes Fear Factory a lot...

GR- So Raymond, you're definitely the most hardcore gamer in the band?

Raymond: Oh, for sure. But the other guys play games too, like Tekken 3, Tomb Raider 3, and other stuff. We each have our favorite genre. One of us is all about shooters, one of us likes adventure stuff, and I play everything.

GR- What's your favorite game right now?

Raymond: Believe it or not, right now it's probably Knockout Kings. It's like the only decent boxing game right now, since I had Dynamite Boxing (a.k.a.) Contender a year ago, and it isn't too good. I need boxing games.

GR- Are you a big import gamer too?

Raymond: Yeah, but the last one I enjoyed was probably Bust a Move, the dance game. We play mostly American games that are easier to get anytime, like NFL Blitz. We play that one a lot.

GR- Do you guys have systems on the tour bus to play?

Raymond: Yeah, we have PlayStations. Those buses are like a living room. I'll play games until 6:00 in the morning, get up at 4:00 in the afternoon. We'll play games during the whole tour.

Christian: O.K., check this out: one time Ray was putting codes in for two weeks straight with his Game Shark! He had lines of code everywhere! Then his card fucks-up, and he loses everything [laughter]. Raymond: Yeah, that Gran Turismo All Cars code killed my Game Shark [laughs]. On one of our tours I had my Neo Geo though. The games on that, King of Fighters, Samurai Shodown, they're such killer games! We killed that one though, played it to death. The Neo Geo is really good for what it was, and so is the 3DO.

GR- You had a 3DO?!

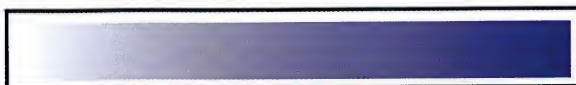
Raymond: Yeah, I'm telling you, I had all the systems. 3DO had FIFA Soccer and Madden...those were so good. Actually, I didn't have the Jaguar, but I know that Alien vs. Predator was killer for the time.

GR- How about Dreamcast? Are you going to get one?

Raymond: I was gonna' get one, but I'll wait until I get one for free, heh. I've just heard a lot of mixed things about the Dreamcast. I know the internet system is different over in Japan so I'd have to buy a whole new Dreamcast when it comes over here anyway. Sonic is really tight though, but VF3 still looks better in the arcade and so does Rally 2. I don't understand it, but hey, I'm not the one making games, right?

THANKS TO MASTER DRUMMER AND GAMER RAYMOND HERRERA AND THE REST OF FEAR FACTORY FOR THEIR TIME AND ALL THEIR QUALITY ANSWERS. WE HOPE TO HEAR YOU IN GAMES FOR YEARS TO COME.

GOOD LUCK!





Deathmatch Mode

Finish in first on all tracks in a league

Mirror Mode

Finish first in all leagues

All easy difficulty tracks

Enter EEFNIEBA as a password and select the Easy difficulty setting in the options menu and begin game play

All hard difficulty tracks

Enter EEFPHMBC as a password and select the Hard difficulty setting in the options menu and begin game play

All expert difficulty tracks

Enter HEMPCMDD as a password and select the Expert difficulty setting in the options menu and begin game play

All hard difficulty and mirrored tracks

Enter EADNCMAH or BDGENADM as a password.

Cheat mode

Enter MAXCHEAT as a password. Just ignore that pesky invalid password alert. It's a damn lie. All leagues, mirror mode, mega-time trials, and more options should be available

Micro Machines 64

Change into objects

Pause the game and enter Down x2, Up x2, Right x2, Left x2. Enter code again to return to normal.

High bounces

Pause the game and enter C-Left, Right x2, Down, Up, Down, Left, Down x2. Enter code again to return to normal.

Turbo mode

Pause the game and enter C-Left, C-Down, C-Right, C-Left, C-Up, C-Down x4. Enter code again to return to normal.

Slow CPU racers

Pause the game and enter C-Right, C-Up, C-Left, C-Down, C-Right, C-Up, C-Left, C-Down. Enter code again to return to normal.

Debug mode

Pause the game and enter C-Left, Up, Down x2, C-Left, C-Right x2, C-Up, C-Down to enable a debug mode. The following debug functions can be activated

Instant win

Press Z + C-Down during game play. This doesn't work during time trials.



Bonus Bits

Death Match	Neato
Death Match	Harpoon
Death Match	Sapphire
Death Match	OutWorld
Mirror Mode	On
Exit	



Roll Cage



Play as Carbunkle

Complete the story mode. Pass the ranking screen after the credits and select free play or versus. Hold R and press Y and move to the left of Satan or the right of Scheze at the character select screen.

Play as Dopple Aruru

Complete story mode, pass the ranking screen after the credits, and select free play or versus mode. Hold L and press Y, then move to the left of Satan or the right of Scheze at the character select screen.

Super Speed Racing

60 frames per second mode
Complete the Championship Mode in first place. The game should now remove mirrors in the cockpit view and decrease the number of cars to twenty to increase the frame rate to 60.

Bonus pace cars
Complete the Championship Mode four times to unlock the Acura NSX, BMW M3, Toyota Celica, and Pick-Up Truck pace cars.

Puyo Puyon 4

Hidden artwork

Place the game disc in a Mac or PC CD-ROM to find images from the game in the Omake folder. You'll also find a couple of WAV format sound files.

Mad mode

Complete the game three times and save. Start a new game with the save file and "Mad Mode" should appear next to the health bar. In this mode, 200 Hassy Drinks, all weapons (including the ray gun) and full ammunition will be available.



Fight as Orange Hulk
Highlight Chun-Li at the character select screen and enter Right x2, Down x2, Left x2, Up x4, Down x2, Right x2, Up x2, Down x4, Up x4, Left, Up. Orange Hulk appears above Ryu

Fight as Roll
Highlight Zangief at the character select screen and enter Left x2, Down x2, Right x2, Down x2, Left x2, Up, Right, Up x2, Right x2. Roll should appear to the right of Mega Man

Fight as Red Venom
Highlight Chun-Li at the character select screen and enter Right, Down x4, Left, Up x4, Right x2, Down x2, Left x2, Down x2, Right x2, Up x4, Left x2, Up. Red Venom should appear above Chun-Li

Fight as Gold War Machine
Highlight Zangief at the character select screen and enter Left x2, Down x2, Right x2, Down x2, Left x2, Up x4, Right x2, Left x2, Down x4, Right x2, Up x2, Left x2, Down x2, Right x2, Up x5. Gold War Machine will appear above Zangief

Blue Stinger



Marvel vs. Capcom



STAR WARS: THE PHANTOM MENACE

Twentieth Century Fox

RATED PG

In theaters May 19

You already know what's up, so here's the unconventional news:

Lucasfilm, working with Cinecomm Digital Cinema and Texas Instruments, plans to install a new digital projector technology at four theaters, presumably in L.A. and New York, using *The Phantom Menace* to usher moviegoers into the digital age. Unfortunately, no one's speculating which theaters...

Tickets are on sale now for a May 16 advance screening in a dozen cities across the U.S., and all are planned to benefit charities from sea to shining sea. For instance, in L.A., proceeds will go to the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. Of course, tickets range in price from \$5000-\$25000 for the screening and after-party, so that leaves me out.

And finally, John Pierson may be the first official person in line for tickets. He set up camp outside of the Zeigfield theater in Manhattan early April, partly to draw press for the new season of his series *Split Screen* on the Independent Film Channel (www.ifctv.com). Seems to be working; he got mentioned here, anyway. And if he's at the front of the line, I'm sure I'll be at the back, as usual. I'll see you there.



SPAWN

HBO

Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* animated series enters its third season this month, and GR received an advance copy of the first two shows for the new season. Based on these shows, they're on track for another great season. The stories are compelling and move *Spawn*'s story along in some great directions, providing further glimpses into Al Simmons' past and *Spawn*'s possible future. In episode 13, *Spawn* is shown his life thus far in the metaphor of some local up-and-coming street hoods in his neighborhood, and is shown how every decision can lead closer to salvation or further toward hell. Episode 14 focuses on Detective Twitch Williams, as he learns more about *Spawn*'s true identity; while I saw the ending coming, I didn't think the writers would actually do it. Do what? Watch it!



For the uninitiated, these cartoons are aimed at adults, and are full of violence, harsh language, and suggestive themes, which is why it airs late-nights on HBO. But the writing and direction are worth staying up for (or taping); McFarlane & co. deliver the goods again.

Third Season premieres May 23



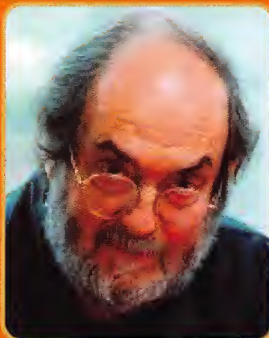
IN MEMORY: Stanley Kubrick

JULY 26, 1928-MARCH 7, 1999

It was with great sadness and surprise that the news of Stanley Kubrick's death made its way around the world on March 8, 1999. The legendary writer/director/producer was 70 when he died of natural causes at his home in the United Kingdom. The Brooklyn native had practically finished cutting his final work, the psychosexual thriller *Eyes Wide Shut* (due July 16) with Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, and had just screened it for the stars and two Warner executives.

Kubrick's legacy began in 1951 with his first film, a 16 minute documentary called *The Day of the Fight*. He followed this with two more documentaries before filming his first feature, *Fear and Desire*. It wasn't until 1957's *Paths of Glory* with Kirk Douglas that Kubrick's genius as a filmmaker could be glimpsed in what has been regarded as one of the best anti-war films of all time. He followed this with the epic *Spartacus*, again with Douglas, and in 1962, an adaptation of Nabokov's *Lolita*. Then in 1964, Kubrick hit with the hilariously dark and brilliant cold war satire *Dr. Strangelove*, and after that, perhaps his best known work, the mind-blowing 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. His next film was an adaptation of Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange*, a film that Kubrick voluntarily banned from screening in the UK because of his concerns that the filmed acts of "ultra-violence" might be acted out by unstable lads. Next was *Barry Lyndon*, a beautiful period piece, which stood in sharp contrast to his 1980 effort, a haunting and surreal adaptation of Stephen King's *The Shining*. Following a seven-year absence from filmmaking, Kubrick released *Full Metal Jacket*, a chilling glimpse into the art of turning humans into killing machines. Sadly, Kubrick would not make another film until this year's *Eyes Wide Shut*, but early reports indicate the filmmaker was uncharacteristically pleased with the end result. However it turns out, cinema has lost one its last true artists, a man capable of creating the illusion of entire, self-contained worlds on strips of celluloid. He will be sorely missed.

-M. Hobbs



THE CUTTING ROOM FLOOR

• **THE WORLD ACCORDING TO BOND:** Word has it that the nineteenth film in the James Bond series, *The World Is Not Enough*, has signed on a new pack of Bond girls: Sophie Marceau, Denise Richards, and Denise Van Outen. As if I wasn't planning on going already... Also, supposedly "Sporty Spice" Mel C will be singing the title track. Apparently they decided "Wannabe" wouldn't make it as a film title... • **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE:** Production on John Woo's sequel to *Mission: Impossible* has been delayed, and rumor has it that the script is being re-worked. Now why didn't they think of that for the first one? • **GET ANIMATED:** Not only can we look forward to *South Park* on the big screen (June 18!), but Matt Groening has hinted at a possible *Simpsons* movie in the works. Your fans have high hopes for this project, Mr. G, but we're also confident that you can do it! • **RAG TAG FLEET, PART 2:** It looks like the *Battlestar Galactica* movie is on schedule to start production in September; they've got a budget, a writer, a producer (or two), an effects house, and a location. And hopefully they'll have a story. By the way, the answers are: \$40 million, Mike Finch, Todd Moyer (and Glen A. Larson), No Prisoners, and Luxembourg. This will be on the test. • **AFTER THE WARS:** *Planet of the Apes*. Summer 2001. 'Nuff said. • **Rob Zombie** (y'know, from White Zombie? The band?) was slated to direct the next *Crow* installment, but alas, it is not to be. The *Crow* movie, not *Zombie*... Anyhoo, he's now signed on with New Line Cinema to write and direct *The Legend of the 13 Graves*. D'ya suppose it'll be a horror flick? *Zombie-style!* • **TAKE OFF, YOU HOSER:** Bob & Doug McKenzie (Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas) are back in the long-awaited sequel to *Strange Brew*, titled *Home Brew*, eh?, and word is that Dan Ackroyd will make an appearance as well. Pretty cool, eh? • **ALIENS ON THE RADAR:** It's been 20 years since my dad took me to see my first scare-the-crap-outta-me movie, *Alien*, and in honor of this anniversary, 20th Century Fox is releasing digitally remastered,



THX certified editions of the line of movies: *Alien*, *Aliens*, *Alien 3*, and *Alien Resurrection*, on DVD and VHS. Look for bonus footage, theatrical trailers, and special documentaries packed into these special editions. Extra underpants not included.

cinematrix

THE GAMER'S GUIDE TO FILM



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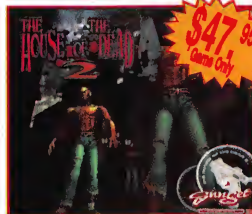
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FALLOUT

Should you wish to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard), please write to:

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Westlake Village, CA 91361 USA (editorial@gamersrepublic.com).



Dear GR,
I'm a very die-hard video game player—I've been playing video games probably before I could read or write. I have had every system under the sun and by no means am I biased towards any system, except for the older generation Sega systems like the Genesis, 32X and Sega CD. I noticed that in about a week I became very bored with all the games I had, and I had tons of games, so I became fed up with Sega. About a month ago I was going in to my favorite store in the mall (EB) and my friend, the Manager, told me he wanted to show me something. I wondered, "What could it be?" Then he said, "I just received a Japanese Sega Dreamcast," and he was like, "Do ya wanna check it out?" I was curious, although I don't like Sega. He popped in Sega Rally and I immediately became excited for some strange reason, as I was finding myself getting into racing games again! It's like something jumped up and bit me in the ass, saying, this is too sweet to be true. It was so life-like. A few days later he showed me Power Stone, which was awesome as well, and so I bought a Japanese Dreamcast with four games. I really hope the money I shelled out was not wasted. Here are some questions I need to ask:

1. Is your magazine going to cover the Dreamcast over the long haul?
 2. Do you think I wasted my money on a Japanese version instead of waiting for the U.S. release?
 3. There's a rumor about a converter coming out to play U.S. games on the Japanese system. Is it true?
 4. Is there any difference between the Japanese and American DC?
- Also, I'd like to add that I hope Sega doesn't create a few great games and then fall off...

Richard J. Provost II

Richard,

First of all, how on earth did you get bored of the Genesis? Did you play Gunstar Heroes, Ranger X, Sonic 1 or 2, Monster World IV, Revenge of Shinobi, or Dynamite Headdy, to name about 2 percent of the greats? Regardless, it's good to see you found your way back. Now let's have at those questions...

1. We will cover the Dreamcast as long as it is not only out, but existing on the planet.
2. It depends on your financial situation. If you had the expendable cash, you made a good buy. If you had to sell the dog, maybe you didn't do so hot.
3. Taiwan always finds a way, although this time it may be a little tricky.
4. The Japanese system comes with a built-in modem, and we're not sure if SOA are going to include it or sell it separately. Otherwise, no.
5. As for Sega sputtering, well, they are serious about seeing this thing through all the way. They have a dedicated staff and PR, good support, wonderful hardware and a head start. And they have us. Now all they need to do is make the developers happy and deliver the games.

Dear GR,

DC Rocks! There is no such thing as too much Dreamcast news! You seem to really have a strong grip on Sega's new super system, so keep it up! A lot of people like me are just starting to perk up our interest on this new platform, so I'm relying on you guys to fill me sick with every bit and piece of Dreamcast pics and news you can muster!

Noel Goodman
Williamsburg Va.

Dear GR,

Your mag speaks for itself, so I'll get right to it. Will Capcom make the following games for N64:
Resident Evil, Street Fighter, Megaman. Also, will Square make any games for the 64?

A. Atlumeidan
Saudi Arabia

Dear A,

Capcom have announced a version of Resident Evil 2 for N64, but it is unlikely that they will announce any more this late in the game. If they were to start a 64 game now, the new Nintendo system would be too close by the time it came out. I know, it's been strange, a Nintendo system without Capcom. I think it sucks. Square will not develop on the cartridge format. Perhaps

the next Nintendo machine will win their support.

Dear GR,

I hope that you guys read this and pass it on to Konami, because I think it's a good idea. I think Konami should do a remake of the original Metal Gear games. They could make it exactly like the original, but with updated graphics. This would be good, because new Metal Gear fans would be able to experience Metal Gear and MG2 Solid Snake.

Joe Richy



Dear GR,

OK, this letter is mostly meant to add another sheet of paper to my fan art submission, because just having a couple pieces of fan art with no letter looks silly if you ask me. Thanks for looking.

Joe Allegrezza

Joe,

Dude, you have the skills!



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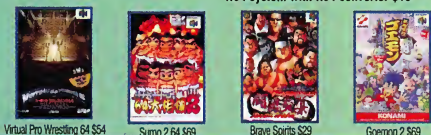
IMPORT

Smash Brother
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Ultra Snow Board Kid
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Powerful Baseball 6
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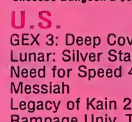


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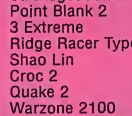
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Bloody Roar 2
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Capcom Gen. V. 1-5
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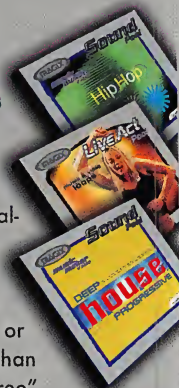
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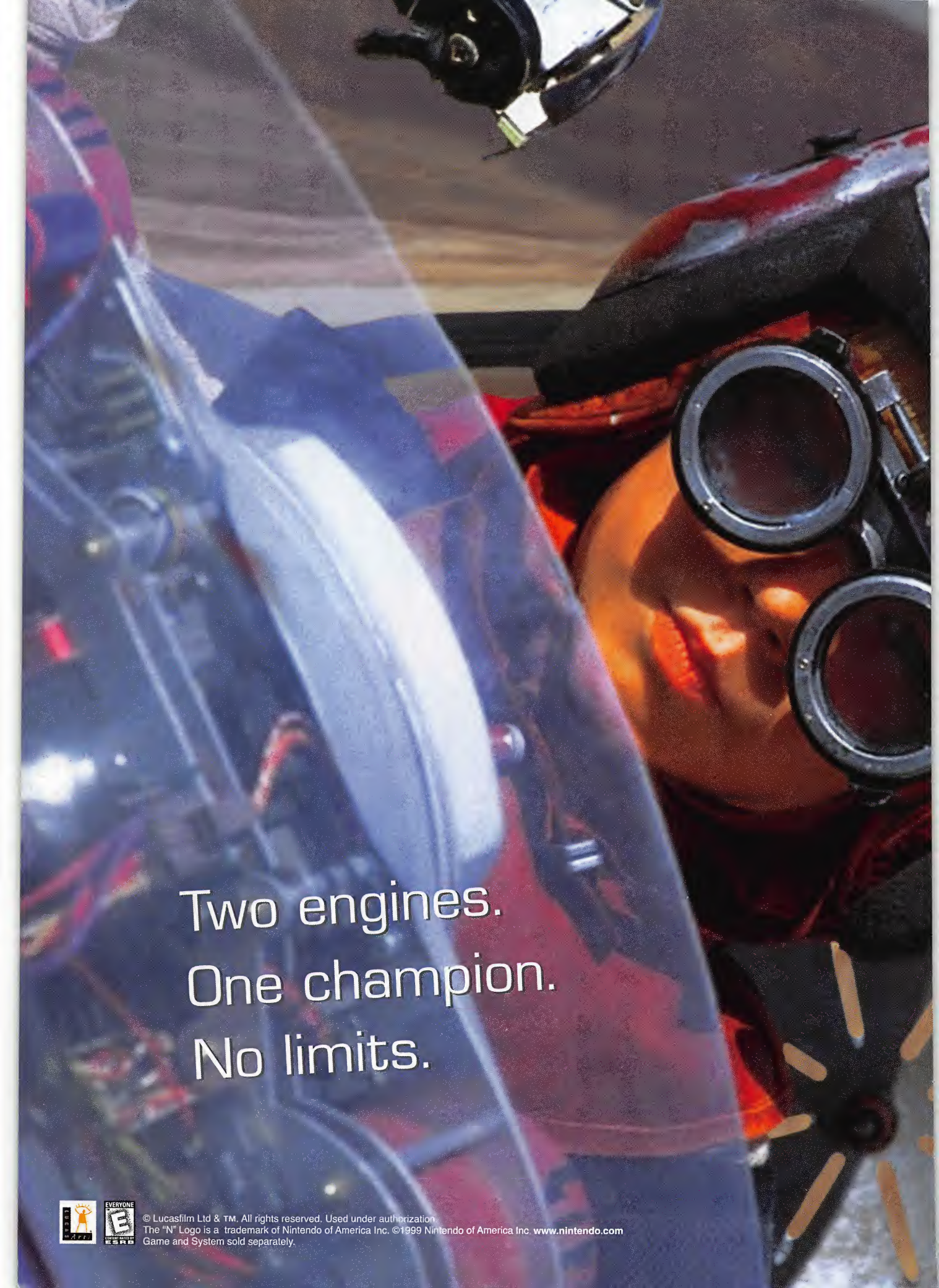
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JULY

COMING NEXT MONTH

Will the Dreamcast steal the show? Will Sony flex their new muscle and preview the PSY? Will Nintendo ever release Conker's Quest? These questions and more will be answered next month when we bring you coverage of the second E3 from Los Angeles, California. Free from the sweaty bondage of foul Atlanta weather, we will gratefully brave the mean streets of LA (uh, I'm staying indoors) to bring you all the news and views from the show floor. Since I have some free space after my witty jargon, here's a couple of show predictions for ya... There will be scantily clothed females everywhere, Sony and Nintendo will have really crowded parties, the air conditioning will be on but you won't be able to feel it, and the seven dollar hamburgers will still taste like cardboard. Join us next month to see how I did. Until then, I bid thee farewell, and good gaming!



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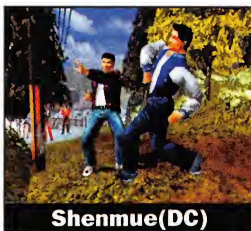


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 Hybrid Heaven
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 Shadowgate 64
 WWF Attitude



Pokemon Snap (N64)



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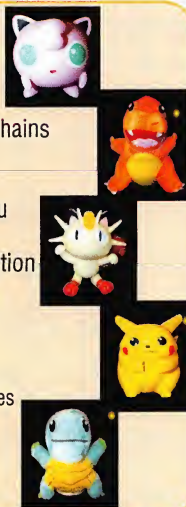
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